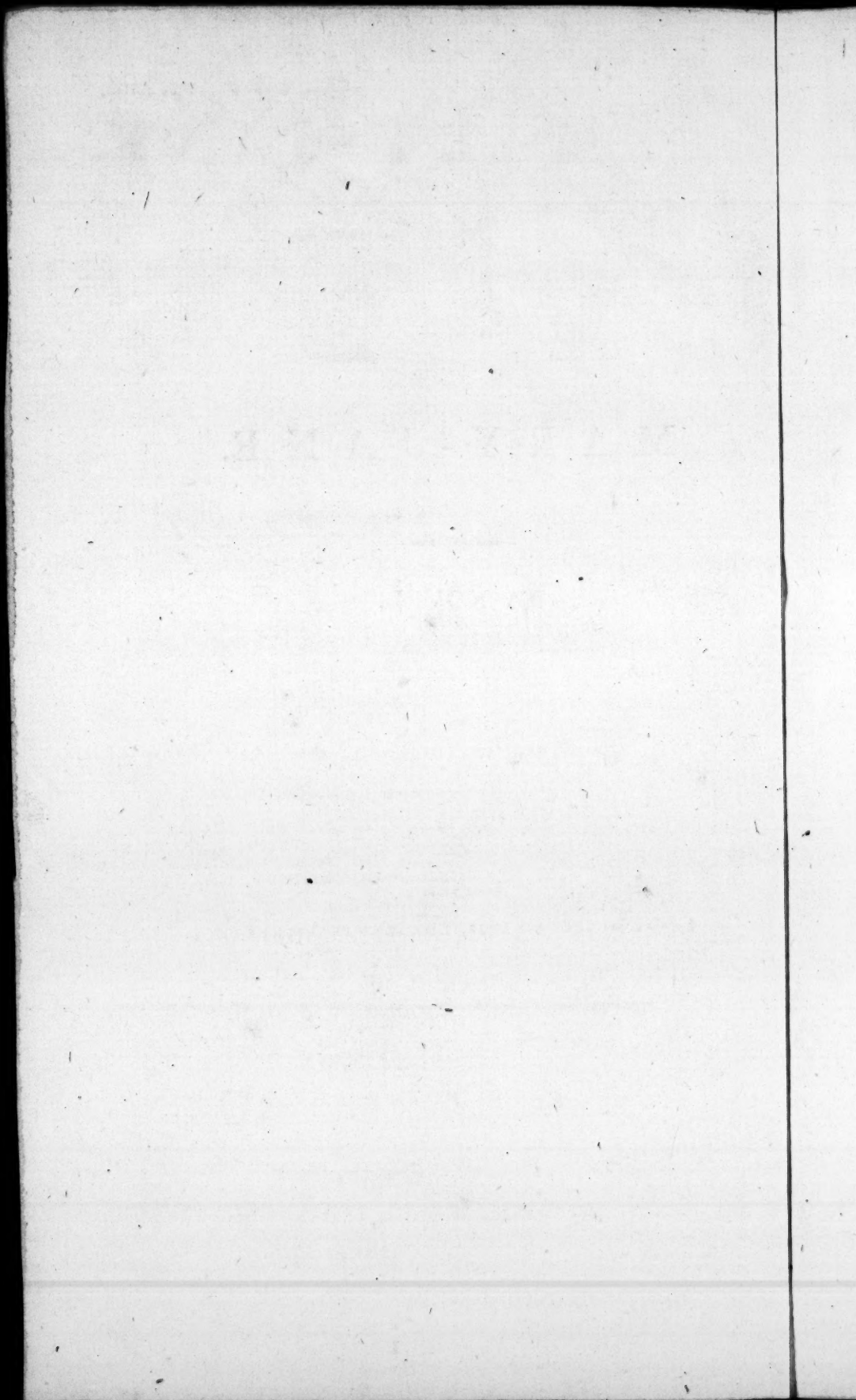


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M A R Y - J A N E.

A NOVEL.

LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.



MARY - JANE.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY
RICHARD SICKELMORE,

AUTHOR OF

EDGAR, OR THE PHANTOM OF THE CASTLE,
AGNES AND LEONORA, &c. &c.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
AT THE
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BY WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL STREET.
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MARY-JANE.

CHAP. I.

Barville Castle.

MARY-JANE, from the idea she had formed when the mouldering structure first presented itself, expected to find the interior of it equally rude and gloomy, was much surprised when conducted to an apartment by Mabel, to find it nearly excelling in modern elegance and magnificence the one from which she had been so recently and suddenly removed.

"This," said Mabel, as they entered it, "being one of the best rooms in the Castle, and which, with your own eyes, you may see my master has spared no expence to make handsome, comfortable, and convenient, is to be your's. The one adjoining, the door of which we have just passed, is to be mine, that I may be always near to wait upon and serve you in every thing."

Mabel then withdrew, observing the journey had given her an appetite, and that she would assist old Martha in tossing up something good for their suppers.

Mary-Jane saw no more of Barville that evening; and having in every thing yielded obedience to Mabel; that lady, well pleased with her docility and submission, about ten o'clock retired to her allotted apartment; and Mary-Jane having secured her's, ventured to undress, and court repose likewise.

She had been in bed about two hours,
when

when she was disturbed by a strange humming noise, which seemed to sound from under the bed. She listened; the noise was again repeated, and much louder than before; she imagined some person was under the bed, and having every thing to dread from the dark designs of Barville, she hastily arose, dressed herself, (the light fortunately she had not extinguished), and began to investigate the chamber.

Nothing, however, could she discover to corroborate her fears; and being at last convinced that the noise had proceeded only from her own distressed imagination, she, though without undressing, again reclined herself upon the bed.

Not long had she lain, when the same noise, accompanied with the shaking and rattling of the bed-furniture, a second time induced her to rise.

For some time every effort was fruitless

to discover what it was that had so dreadfully alarmed her, when the noise was again repeated with the same effect as before. Mary-Jane now concluded that some person was behind the bed, and, made desperate by fear and anxiety, placed her knee against the bedstead, removed it from its situation, and soon found the cause of her perturbation and alarm.

A large door, secured on the side next to her with two immense iron bolts, which the bed had before concealed, shaking violently as the rising wind gushed forcibly against it on the opposite side, convinced Mary-Jane had produced the humming noise, and agitated the bed-furniture; and prompted by curiosity to discover where the door led to, she seized the light, and withdrew the bolts; which she had hardly effected when the door burst open with violence, and struck the candle from her hand.

Mary-Jane however, relieved from her
fears

fears that Barville had a private entrance into her room, and being certain that the door had opened so suddenly but from the force of the wind, which still blew strong in her face, stood for some time endeavouring to penetrate with her eyes through the intense darkness beyond it, when a hollow groan, at no great distance from her, occasioned her to withdraw, and, trembling with apprehension, again to shut and secure the door. The moon, at that time, darting her rays into the apartment, enabled her, though with some labour and difficulty, to replace the bed in its former position; which having done, she again threw herself upon it, and tried to compose her spirits.

Mary-Jane, though she again heard the former noise, was no longer disturbed by it; but the deep and hollow groan still dwelt on her mind, and she determined in the morning to solicit Mabel to get her removed into another apartment.

As daylight appeared, however, Mary-Jane's courage returned with it; and an idea suggested itself that should not Barville liberate her as he had promised, the door, which had at first so alarmed her, might by some means or other be rendered conducive to her escape; and she inwardly resolved on the next night to examine the parts it led to. She would have preferred doing it in the day-time, but then she was liable to be detected by Mabel; should which happen, the benefit she anticipated would be irretrievably lost. Having thus altered her intention of soliciting Mabel for a removal, she conceived it more prudent to be entirely silent on the subject.

Mabel, at an early hour, joined her in the morning, and evinced, by her haggard appearance, that she had passed nights infinitely more to her satisfaction than the last.

"Well, Lady," said she, looking stedfastly
at

at Mary-Jane, "I hope you have slept soundly."

"As well," replied Mary-Jane, "as a wretch in my deplorable situation could expect."

"Did you hear any particular noise in the night," enquired Mabel, "to disturb you?"

"Why should you suspect I did?" rejoined Mary-Jane. "Have you seen or heard any thing to distress you?"

"Good Lord!" said Mabel, as she retired without answering Mary-Jane's question, "some people certainly have no ears."

Barville paid Mary-Jane a visit in the course of the day, but found her equally disinclined as before to listen to his proposals; and was reminded, ere he left her, that at the stipulated time she expected to be conveyed to her friends.

About eleven o'clock on the same evening,
B 4 when

when Mabel had withdrawn for the night, Mary-Jane removed the bed, opened the door, and prepared to put her design, of exploring the parts beyond it, into execution; and, lest the wind should again extinguish the light, she held one hand cautiously before the blaze, and began to reconnoitre the place.

She first entered a large oval room, but entirely unfurnished, which the dim light she held scarcely sufficed to render visible; the walls in many places were decayed and humid with the noxious dew that trickled down them; several large chasms, through which the wind found an easy admission, gave it so desolate an appearance, that Mary-Jane shuddered with horror as her eyes glanced over it; it, however, convinced her that that part of the building was uninhabited, and inspired her with new hopes of effecting her escape, should Barville not fulfil his promise.

At

At the opposite extremity a door half open presented itself; Mary-Jane passed through it, and found herself in a narrow passage, which she in melancholy silence pursued, until she arrived at the head of a stone staircase, which she began to descend; but ere she had reached the bottom, placing her foot upon something which slid with the pressure, she had nearly fallen. The taper, in her endeavour to save herself, dropped from her hand; and instantly a loud bustle, as of persons hurrying different ways, resounded through deserted rooms.

Mary-Jane, trembling with surprise and terror, now inwardly reproached herself for her temerity.—Something whisked by her; she uttered an involuntary scream, which echoing dismally from every part, conveyed a nameless horror to her heart. For some time she remained transfixed and immovable, agonized with the most fearful apprehensions; when every thing again becoming silent and undisturbed, her courage once

more returned: for though enveloped in midnight darkness, and encompassed with surrounding horrors, reflection partly subdued the painful emotions that had at first seized her, and told her that a mind, conscious of having committed no crime, and endeavouring to render abortive the fell contrivances of guilt, would ensure her that protection and support from the all-wise and omnipotent Being, as would safely deliver her from impending dangers.

Mary-Jane, ere she retraced her way back, was induced, by an instinctive impulse, to stoop and endeavour to recover the candlestick she had dropped; which believing she had obtained, at last, though not without great labour and difficulty, to her inexpressible joy, found herself at the entrance of her apartment, and was about to close the secret door, having been too much terrified, even could she have relighted her taper, that night to wish to examine any further, when again a deep and hollow groan, similar
to

to what she had heard on the preceding evening, reverberated from the empty space adjoining.

Mary-Jane, again overcome with terror and surprise, hastily placed the candlestick upon the toilet, and fastened the door with the ponderous bolts, replaced the bed as before, and fancying she heard some person in her room, instinctively threw herself upon the bed, and hid herself under the counterpane.

Not long had she lain trembling with suspense, ere her fears were confirmed. She distinctly heard footsteps cautiously approaching towards her; she had just strength sufficient to raise her head, and endeavour, if possible, through the extreme darkness, to discriminate the object, when a cold hand rested on her face, and another groan, more loud and terrible than either she had before heard, struck full upon her ear. With a sudden start, accompanied by

a fearful shriek, she threw herself from the opposite side of the bed upon the floor, when a female voice exclaimed — “ The Lord forgive me my sins! — What will become of me?”

Mary-Jane, a little relieved, as the voice seemed familiar to her, tremulously ejaculated — “ Say, who are you, and what is your business with me?”

“ Mercy upon me! I am glad to find it is you; you have almost scared me out of my senses,” said a voice which Mary-Jane knew to be Mabel’s.

“ How gained you admittance into this room?” faintly uttered Mary-Jane.

“ Why,” answered Mabel, “ having last night been sorely terrified by the opening and shutting of doors, when I knew all the family to be at rest, I thought I would ask your permission to let me be with you, should I be disturbed in like manner again; and being but a short time since greatly frightened with a repetition of the same sounds,

sounds, I hurried out of bed, and finding you had not secured your door, which I thought was lucky enough, I crept softly into the room, and believing you to be asleep, I thought I would wake you, and inform you of my distress. I felt about the bed for some time, but could not find you; at last I but just touched you, when you sprung out of bed in such a confounded hurry, that I even then took you for the ghost, and groaned for fear, as I have done for two nights past as I lay in bed. I expected nothing less than to be murdered, and was about to say my prayers, when your sweet voice, thank Heaven! prevented me."

Mary-Jane then seated herself upon the bed, and tried to compose the violent perturbation of her spirits. Mabel returned to her own apartment, struck a light, and was soon with her again.

Mary-Jane, on perceiving the door of
her

her chamber open, was convinced that what Mabel had said was true; and though she blamed herself for her neglect, felt much relieved that the groans she had heard were thus accounted for, and the noise which had excited them was now palpable that she had been the occasion of.

“Why, Lady,” exclaimed Mabel, on perceiving the agitated state of Mary-Jane, “you seem to have been more scared than myself! But what have you done with your candle?—mine, I am afraid, will not burn till morning.”

Mary-Jane pointed to the toilet, on which Mabel placed the one she held in her hand; then suddenly exclaimed—“The Lord forgive me, what have we here?” and, uttering a fearful scream, she hurried back again into her own chamber.

Mary-Jane, astonished at her conduct, fixed her eyes upon the toilet, and with
indescribable

indescribable horror beheld what she had brought with her in the dark from the ruinous part of the fabric, and which she imagined, in the agitation of her mind, to have been the candlestick, to be the jaw-bone and part of the scull of a human being, the flesh in many parts still on it, though putrid and offensive.

Motionless with horrible surprise, she continued for some time to gaze on it; at last gathering a degree of frantic courage, she was about to quit the room, when Barville entered. She involuntarily drew back as he approached her.

“What, Miss Radmill,” said he, “has occasioned this sudden commotion in the Castle?—You appear ill; what——”

His eye rested upon the spectacle on the toilet. — Rivetted to the spot, he stood aghast as he beheld it; articulation was suspended; his countenance changed to a deadly pale;

pale; his lips quivered; every feature was convulsed with fear and dread; he trembled universally; and Mary-Jane, rushing past him, soon gained Mabel's apartment, and fastened the door.

Here, with Mabel, she fearfully passed the night; who believed, as Mary-Jane ventured not to undeceive her, what she had seen to have been raised by supernatural power.

CHAP. II.

The Ring.

MARY-JANE, soon after she had left Barville, and hurried into Mabel's apartment, heard him precipitately descend the stairs, but afterwards return, and some person with him, and again enter the room, where he had before been so completely shocked and terrified;—his voice she could distinguish; but whom he was speaking to she knew not; nor, as they spoke in a low tone, could she learn the subject of their discourse.

As soon as daylight appeared, Mabel for a short time left her, and Mary-Jane began
to

to ruminate more deeply upon the terrific incidents of the night. She shuddered as her thoughts reverted to what, in her agitation, she had removed from the uninhabited part of the edifice. The terror and alarm Barville betrayed on beholding it, almost proved to her he was a murderer. The idea was dreadful, but she believed it just.

The door, which had created so much terror and confusion, she endeavoured to persuade herself all except herself were ignorant of, through which she still determined, if no better way offered, to attempt an escape; but then how could she answer the interrogatories, which she naturally conceived would be made, without betraying it? The more she pondered, the more perplexed she became; when, dropping on her knees, she invoked the assistance of Heaven safely to deliver her from the abode of sin and death.

Barville, to her great relief, did not visit
her

her the whole of that day. Mabel informed her that he was suddenly taken ill.

“ And no wonder,” said she ; “ for I understand by Rowland, who looks plaguy pale and grim about something or other himself, that he saw the ghost in the same horrid shape it appeared to us last night ; which, for my part, I am by no means sorry for, as most likely we shall shortly, in consequence, be whirled back again to London.

Mary-Jane was secretly gratified that thus far she had escaped the suspicion she most dreaded. Mabel continued with her the whole of this day, as she did likewise the day succeeding, except when the cravings of nature obliged her to be absent to prepare their meals ; and even then not without great apprehension that she should again encounter some terrible spectre.

On the third morning of her confining
herself

herself in Mabel's room, the stipulated period of one week expired, and Mary-Jane became as anxious to see Barville as she had before dreaded his presence.

However, two days more elapsed, and she saw him not. Mabel informed her that he still continued indisposed, and confined to his chamber.

"If he should die," thought Mary-Jane, "with all his sins upon his head!" Much as she feared him, much as she abhorred him, much as she wished to rush into the arms of Radmill and Henry, to be liberated by his dissolution, ere by repentance he had sought to expiate his crimes, chilled her with horror.

Late in the evening of the same day all apprehensions of his death were suddenly dispelled, and fears of another nature took full possession of her; for Barville himself stalked

stalked into her apartment, but not with his usual politeness, or even deigning to make any apology for intruding upon her privacy at so late an hour; but instantly seating himself, commanded her to do the same. She trembled, but dared not to disobey him. With a scrutinizing look he for some time eyed her in sullen silence; his soul seemed big with some horrible design; relentless passion sat scowling on his gloomy brow; at last, in accents terrible, he uttered—"Well, haughty Madam, do you consent to what before I vainly have solicited?"

The wretched Mary-Jane, aghast with grief and terror, in words scarcely audible, made answer—"The solemn promise made to me——"

"Yourself have absolved me from. The bribery with which you attempted to corrupt my servant, has long since made that void; and know that, rendered desperate by your childish

childish obstinacy, if you persist in refusing my proffered terms, force shall obtain what you have hitherto denied; force shall gratify impetuous desires, made more fierce and violent by procrastination."

Mary-Jane, shuddering as the dreadful words issued from his lips, started from her seat; virtuous indignation inspired her with courage, and she with energy replied—"Inhuman monster, dead to every sense of honour, feeling, or humanity, ere it be too late, turn thee from the destructive paths of sin and guilt; and know that Mary-Jane, whom thou seekest to reduce to a level with thyself, protected from above, shall triumph over the deadly machinations of an assassin!"

"Ah, an assassin! sayst thou so! Then thus I'll put thy boasted courage to the test!"

Then rushing toward her, he rudely seized her in his arms, and proceeded to indecent freedoms.

Mary-Jane,

Mary-Jane, finding herself thus violently assaulted, vainly endeavoured to spurn the polluted dæmon from her; she shrieked, entreated, defied, till nearly exhausted with the struggle, pale and breathless, her senses fast receding, he was about to accomplish his brutal purpose, when a miniature, which hung suspended from her neck, met his sight. A terrific horror seized him; his eyes glared with wild affright, as if he had gazed upon the most ghastly phantom imagination ever formed;—he cast her suddenly from him, and stood transfixed in speechless agony and surprise; while Mary-Jane, once more released, her spirits quickly returned, and on her knees she petitioned for mercy.

“Answer me truly,” he at last pronounced, every feature convulsed with excess of dread and astonishment; “answer me truly, as thou wilt account for it hereafter—whose resemblance do I now behold?”

Mary-Jane,

Mary-Jane, observing his eyes intently fixed upon the miniature, tremulously ejaculated—"Alas, my father's! and this," shewing him the opposite side, "my fainted mother's."

Had perdition's yawning gulf, and all its attendant horrors, opened at his feet, he could not have seemed more appalled; he gnashed his teeth in agony; every feature was contracted; his bosom heaved with violent emotions; his lips quivering and livid, and writhing with unutterable anguish, he staggered from the apartment.

Mary-Jane, freed from her betrayer at a moment so unexpected, with ideas wild and incoherent, looked fearfully around. A confused noise from below aroused her to a sense of the danger she had so providentially escaped; her heart beat quick with apprehension, lest Barville should return. With frantic celerity she darted, and secured the door.

"Oh

“ Oh Radmill! Oh Henry!” she exclaimed, as all again was hushed in silence, “ how would your sympathizing hearts be torn did you but know the agonies that rend the afflicted bosom of your suffering Mary-Jane!”

Lost in a chaos of distracting thoughts, for some time she continued pacing the apartment, when the possibility of escaping through the ruinous parts of the edifice again presented itself, and partly subdued the raging tumult of her mind. Not a moment was to be lost; but then, once without the building, whither could she turn for refuge? —No matter—she could but die; and death to one so superlatively wretched, would be a kind release from torture. In an instant she entered the adjoining room, removed the bed, withdrew the heavy bolts, and having secured the light, soon reached the stone staircase she had in part before descended; a door which terminated it, with the slightest difficulty opened, and Mary-Jane found herself in what once had been a

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spacious hall. The wind blowing strong in her face, through the apertures of the decayed walls, evinced to her she was near the extremity of the fabric;—she endeavoured to discover an opening large enough to admit her through, when the same strange noise she had been saluted with some evenings before, resounded throughout the dismal structure. Motionless with terror, she cast her eyes fearfully around, when, to her great relief, she observed two monstrous owls, alarmed at her unwelcome intrusion, and beating their wings with wild affright in their attempts to escape, occasioned the noise that had again so much appalled her.

Unsuccessful, however, proved her every effort to escape; several tremendous chasms the light she held rendered visible, but then they were such an immense height from the ground, it was impossible for her to reach them: when discovering another pass, she
hastily

haftily turned into it, fraught with the expectation of accomplishing her design.

Several lofty rooms, fimilar to thofe ſhe had already explored, diſrobed of every ornament that had formerly decorated them, crumbling under the hoary hand of Time, damp, gloomy, cheerleſs, and abandoned, conveying unſpeakable horrors to the mind, in melancholy ſucceſſion ſhe paſſed through, when finding all her efforts terminate in diſappointment, in agonies unutterable, ſhe reclined herſelf upon a fragment of the ruin, which intercepted her paſſage into another apartment. The dim light caſt a fearful gleam upon ſurrounding objects; big drops of miſery now forced a paſſage from her eyes; her heart palpitated with a violence as though it would burſt the priſon that confined it; her anguiſhed ſpirit, which before the idea of eſcaping had kept alive, died within her—all was black horror, miſery and deſpair!

Irresolute and undetermined where next to guide her weary steps, and almost sinking beneath the weight of accumulating terrors, her eye glanced on something but a short distance from her, which glittering with unusual brightness, as the partial rays of the taper gleamed on it, induced her, amidst a rude heap of rubbish, to advance toward it. On arriving at the spot, she discovered that what had attracted her notice, was a diamond ring; and immediately stooping to pick it up, the dust and dirt under her feet gave way, and she gradually slid from a harder substance, which lay concealed beneath it, when she beheld, Almighty Providence! what in such a situation might have appalled the stoutest heart—the body of a man in the most frightful state of putrefaction; part of the scull and under-jaw had been severed from him, and proved that what she had seized in her perturbation in the dark, had once belonged to the mutilated object in view; the eye-balls, which as yet decay had not annihilated, swelled

swelled to a prodigious size, and bursting from their sockets, with a ghastly stare seemed fixed on her. Suffering Nature could endure no more; a piercing shriek issued from her lips; a deathlike dew overspread her pallid brow; her faculties were suspended; her joints benumbed and stiff; the light dropped from her hand; she gasped, staggered, and fell insensible amidst the general desolation.

How long she had continued prostrate, deprived of sense and motion, she knew not, when returning life gave her a faint recollection of the horrid incidents that had occurred; trembling with predictive dread, slowly she arose, and in the dark wandered whithersoever chance might direct her. Soon after the sound of heavy footsteps approaching met her ear; the next moment a dim light glimmering in one hand, the other clenching a dagger, Barville, with features distorted, his eyes glaring dismally around, appeared before her. On seeing her, he started,

as if uncertain whether he beheld the object he fought. Murder scowled on his brow, and evinced his hellish purpose. A frantic horror seizing Mary-Jane, she would have fled; but the dæmon, catching her by the shoulder, prevented her, and with uplifted arm was about to plunge the impending weapon in her bosom, when a strange, confused noise near to him retarded his purpose, and a loud voice just behind him pronounced—"Hold, thou damned miscreant!—Hell-hound, forego thy rash intent, and from me receive a punishment guilt like thine deserves!"

Trembling, he released her from his grasp; and Mary-Jane again darted through the dreary, intricate apartments. The moon, casting a feeble ray, discovered to her an aperture in the wall;—she flew towards it; it led to the exterior of the building—how high from the level of the earth she knew not. Despair had taken full possession of her; she sprung through it; and stunned with the fall, lay insensible at the base of the structure.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

A Friend in Need.

WHEN the crimson current of existence, renewed in vital warmth, resumed its wonted motion, and restored life and reason to the harassed frame of the suffering Mary-Jane, she found herself in bed; a strange woman, with motherly attention, was watching anxiously by the side of it. Mary-Jane endeavoured to rise, but found herself too weak, together with a violent pain in her head, and her limbs sadly bruised and sore, to accomplish her intent.

The woman, perceiving her endeavour,
c 4 tenderly

tenderly enquired how she was, and begged that she would keep herself as tranquil and quiet as possible.

“Where am I?” exclaimed Mary-Jane; “and who are you that seem to possess so much pity and commiseration for a wretch so woe-fraught and destitute as myself?”

“Sweet lady,” she replied, “be of good heart; here you are safe from danger; but try and compose yourself—at present you are too ill to listen to what I have to relate to you. Another time, when your health is more established, you shall know how I have learned some few particulars that so recently afflicted you; in the interim rest satisfied with the assurance I have made to you, that you are safe from danger, and whatever can be administered to your relief and consolation, you may here command.”

There was an indescribable something in the manner of the person who thus addressed

addressed her, that banished suspicion, and evinced to Mary-Jane that she was no longer subject to the controul of Barville; an inexpressible sensation of gratitude and delight thrilled in her bosom, which, though no sound issued from her lips, her countenance sufficiently indicated, and the good matron appeared equally gratified that her words had produced so agreeable an effect.

The cause of this sudden alteration in Mary-Jane's situation may not be unpleasant to our readers, ere we proceed to delineate what further befel her, here to have elucidated.

Dunstan, who it may be remembered had been appointed to the care and management of Barville Castle in the absence of the family, on the day preceding Mary-Jane's escape, being dispatched by Rowland to a village about eight miles distant, to purchase some articles, for which they had occasion, the sombre veil of night had some

hours obscured the radiant orb of day, when fortunately he returned just at the moment Mary-Jane sprung through an aperture in the dilapidated wall, and fell inanimate at its rugged base.

He, as she fell, obtained a glimpse of her; and imagining her to be the ghost with which report had haunted the edifice, stood with hair erect, and eyes fearfully fixed upon the object which lay motionless but a short distance from him, irresolute whether to advance, or seek the entrance of the Castle by another road, when some incautious words that had dropped from Mabel respecting her master's designs upon the lady he had brought with him, recurred to his memory; and the idea that what he beheld might be the strange lady attempting to free herself from the wicked contrivances of Barville, presented itself, and inspired him with the courage to examine if his surmise were just.

With

With cautious and trembling steps he advanced towards her; a stream of light, that was emitted from a chink in the structure, shone full upon her face, and he immediately remembered her to be the same person he had once before seen, which was on her first arrival, as she alighted from the carriage, and was conducted into the Castle by Mabel. Humanity triumphed over every other sensation; he raised her from the earth, but found her motionless and insensible. He at first concluded her to be dead, when a deep sigh convinced him of the contrary; his sympathizing heart palpitated with the hope of rescuing her from the merciless grasp of her inhuman betrayer: therefore, taking her in his arms, he instinctively conveyed her, senseless as she was, for better than two miles, to the residence of a Mrs. Melworth, well knowing the benevolence of that lady would render her every beneficial attention in her power to bestow.

Dunstan had some days suspected that all was not right in the Castle, for though poor, he was honest; and believing, from what he had heard Mabel utter, his master to be no better than he should be, had often wished himself out of his service.

Of Barville he knew but little, having been employed by him but a few months, and those few he had been secluded with Martha in the Castle; where he might, to this time, have continued comfortable and undisturbed, had Barville, as he intended when he last left it, not returned to it again. Mabel was by no means a favourite with him—there was a certain boldness about her which he thought unbecoming a woman in her situation; and of Rowland he absolutely was afraid, and had actually hinted his determination to Martha of resigning his employment, and seeking a livelihood any where, rather than continue with people whom, though he hardly knew for why, he disliked so much.

“ Well,”

“ Well,” thought Dunstan, as he proceeded with his lovely burthen towards Mrs. Melworth’s, “ the worst than can happen to me, should I by honest Rowland be detected in the performance of this charitable office, is but to lose my place; and to lose that which troubles me to keep, is not a punishment, but a kind reward, and such as I can well desire.”

On his arrival at Mrs. Melworth’s, and knocking loudly at the door, he was soon admitted into the hospitable mansion, where the surprise his strange appearance, with a lady apparently dead in his arms, occasioned, was, on his relating all he knew and imagined relative to Mary-Jane, quickly succeeded by anxious wishes and endeavours to recover her from the alarming state in which she still continued. Their united efforts at last produced the desired effect, when Mrs. Melworth had her conveyed to bed, where, soon after, with extreme pleasure
she

she saw her open her eyes, when the few words before mentioned were uttered.

For several days was Mary-Jane painfully confined to her bed; during which time Mrs. Melworth, with the most unremitting assiduity, was almost incessantly with her; to whom Mary-Jane related in what manner she had been forced from her friends by Barville, and the treatment she had since experienced from him: but mentioned not any particulars relative to the mangled body she had stumbled over in her attempts to escape, for her blood froze with horror as in silence her ideas sometimes reverted to the circumstance.

Mrs. Melworth heard her with speechless astonishment. Barville's terror and surprise on beholding the miniature, (which Radmill, it being the only relic left of her deceased parent, had given to her), his subsequent attempt upon her life, together with the voice which had appalled and
saved

saved him from the execution of a deed so dreadful, she could by no means account for.

“Great and merciful God!” she exclaimed, as Mary-Jane finished, “who will not suffer those who firmly rely upon thee for protection, and walk in thy ways, to be entangled in the snares of the wicked, but wilt cause the evil they meditate to recoil upon themselves, endue us with fortitude, under thy divine will, patiently to submit to the painful vicissitudes and troubles of this life, which thou, in thy wisdom, deemest it expedient we should suffer, that in the end we may rise superior to sin, and taste of happiness eternal!”

Several days more elapsed; Mary-Jane had nearly regained her strength, and waited anxiously for an answer to a letter which had been transmitted to the post-office for Radmill, and another for Henry, when, on

perceiving Mrs. Melworth more penfive than ufual, ſhe thus addreſſed her:—

“ My dear Mrs. Melworth, my good and amiable friend, has any ſudden cauſe thus tinged your cheeks with ſorrow? Or can thy grateful Mary-Jane be ſo ſuperlatively bleſſed as to afford thee conſolation? At leaſt, I do beſeech thee, unboſom thy griefs, and let me ſhare them with thee.— Miſery, if not ſubdued, may be much relieved by participation.”

“ Alas!” ſhe replied, “ all earthly happineſs deſerted me when my poor Matilda expired. Reflecting on what you have ſo recently endured, recalled to my remembrance the ſufferings of my lamented daughter. You are not the only one, or I am much deceived, that has been vilely treated by the deteſted Barville.—You ſeem amazed; if you can have the patience to liſten to me, I will acquaint you in a few words with her melancholy ſtory.

“ It is now nearly fourteen years ſince I
fixed

fixed my abode in Wales. Having lost one of the best of husbands, and with him all relish for the more busy circles of society, I retired, with my Matilda, my only child, then only three years of age, to this estate. Together in tranquil retirement we spent our time; no sorrow, save regret for him we had lost, ever visited our solitary mansion until Matilda numbered seventeen years. 'Tis now scarcely eight months since, we, tempted by the serenity of the weather, had pursued a pleasant walk, until the black turrets of Barville Castle opening to our view, informed us of the distance we had almost insensibly wandered;—evening was fast approaching, and the bright azure canopy above, which had induced us to walk so far, on a sudden became overcast and gloomy. Heavy clouds, gathering in the distant horizon, indicated an approaching tempest; big drops of rain were now fast descending; and unknowing where to fly for immediate refuge, we instinctively hastened toward the Castle, when a gentleman, perceiving

ceiving our distress, proceeded from it, and politely invited us to walk into it. We readily complied with his obliging request, and there continued until the violence of the storm abated, when he, as the turf was then become wet and marshy from the torrent it had so recently imbibed, insisted on conveying us in his carriage to our home. This offer we likewise gratefully accepted, and soon after we again reached our residence.

“ From that period the person who had so timely sheltered us from the rude inclemency of the elements, who it is almost needless to inform you was Barville, was our daily visiter; and, ignorant of the depravity of his heart, we on a sudden became so social with him, that in return we would frequently visit at Barville Castle.

“ My Matilda at this period was betrothed to an amiable youth, of the name of Nugent, with whom from infancy she had been acquainted, and who would frequently from London, his native residence, spend

spend a few weeks with us in our retirement.

“ One evening Matilda, myself being indisposed, pursued her evening’s walk without me; when the hours waxing late, and her not returning, gave me great uneasiness lest some misfortune had befallen her. I dispatched a servant in quest of her, but no Matilda could he find; in short, the night passed tediously away, day once more returned, and still my Matilda, the solace of my life, was absent.

“ My distress is more easily conceived than described—all our efforts to discover her the whole of that day ended in disappointment; when late the next evening, her hair dishevelled, despair and wildness in her looks, she entered this apartment, where I alone was sitting in all the melancholy despondency of grief. I started as I beheld her, when, with a piercing shriek, she dropped lifeless at my feet.

“ I rushed towards her, gently raised her up, and having rung the bell for assistance,

assistance, pursued the necessary means to restore her. She soon discovered symptoms of returning life; and I tenderly enquired what unhappily had befallen her, when the incoherence of her replies evinced to me her faculties were impaired, for fixing her eyes in a vacant stare, she exclaimed—‘ See, he is there again!—hide me from his fury!’—‘ My sweet girl,’ I rejoined, ‘ be composed; do not thus afflict your parent! Whom should we hide you from?’—‘ That fiend of the Castle!’ she again exclaimed. ‘ Hold!’ she continued; ‘ release me, or Nugent dies!—There, ’tis done!—He’s gone, lost, faded, extinct!—No, see, he revives again!—Oh spare him!—See how the crimson gore trickles from him!—Inhuman, barbarous monster, thus to disfigure what God had made so perfect!—That last stroke has purchased thy damnation!—Oh villain! villain! villain!’—Her senses again forsook her, and she relapsed into insensibility.

“ For two days did I watch by her after she again recovered from her swoon, but she

she knew me not ; her delirium increased ; a fever seized her agitated frame, and she expired in my arms !”

Mrs. Melworth was for some time too much agitated to proceed. At length she continued—

“ That Barville, by some means or other, had been instrumental to her death, I doubted not, though the truth I never could discover. He left his Castle ere my poor Matilda breathed her last, and until the evening Dunstan conveyed you to my dwelling, I was ignorant of his return ; but, no doubt, Heaven in due time will bring all to light, and hurl the thunderbolt of vengeance on his head.

“ What much astonished me,” continued Mrs. Melworth, “ two months after my child was interred, I received a letter from Nugent’s father, requesting me to write, and inform him if his son was with me, as he had many weeks before left London, with

with an intention to journey as far as Wales, since which time he had neither seen nor heard from him. He has written several times since; and this day I have received another, saying he has not yet returned, and that his friends are inconsolable on account of it, fearful some dreadful accident must have befallen him."

Mary-Jane used every art to still the tumult in the mind of her benefactress, which the relation of the foregoing circumstances had painfully excited; which having once accomplished, she was extremely cautious not to renew the topic. The terrible ideas that assailed her as Mrs. Melworth concluded her narrative, she preserved within her own bosom, as an acknowledgment of them would have increased that disorder she was so anxious to overcome.

Several weeks passed away, and Mary-Jane received no answer to the letter which had been delivered at the post-office
for

for Radmill, when she determined, notwithstanding Mrs. Melworth tried every effort to dissuade her, to set off for London, not doubting but Radmill had ere that returned to his residence in town.

Mary-Jane had, when she so unexpectedly left Brighton, nine guineas and a few shillings in her pocket, which as yet she had had no occasion to diminish; therefore she refused to accept of an augmentation to her purse, which Mrs. Melworth, on finding her peremptorily bent upon the journey, strongly urged, being fully convinced she had more in her possession than she should expend ere she saw Radmill and Henry.

The morning of her departure at last arrived; and having been assisted in procuring the necessary conveyance by Mrs. Melworth, after bidding her an affectionate adieu, she was, without encountering any disagreeable incident on the road, after an absence

absence of more than five months, safely set down at Charing-Cross.

Here she obtained a hackney-coach; and telling the coachman where to drive to, in a short time she alighted at the door of her earliest benefactor.

CHAP. IV.

The Warrant.

MARY-JANE, whose heart beat high with the expectation of once more embracing those on earth most dear to her, ordered the man to knock at the door, and, too impatient to wait its being opened, she descended from the coach, and searching for her purse to pay the coachman his fare, to her surprise discovered she had lost it. At Charing-Cross

Cross she had paid from it the remainder of what was due for her passage from Wales, and rightly conjectured that in her hurry and agitation to procure a hackney-coach, some person had picked her pocket. At any other time such a disaster would seriously have vexed her; at this time she heeded it but little, and desired the man to wait until the door was opened, and her friends knew of her arrival, and he should receive his money.

Mary-Jane then ascended the steps which led to the door, to which no person had attended; the whole edifice resounded as she the second time more forcibly applied for admittance, but to as little purpose; nor did a third and fourth effort meet with better success.

A rich old spinster, who resided in the next house, and who by this sudden and repeated knocking at Radmill's door, had been aroused from a comfortable nap she

was enjoying by the fire-side, thrust her head out of her parlour window, and not in the mildest accents exclaimed—"You had much better pick the lock, and rob the house that way, as by splitting the door you will alarm the neighbourhood, who may not chuse to be quiet spectators when such depredations are committed; for no doubt you are acquainted that the owner of the house has, with his family, been absent almost six months."

"What does that good-humoured old tabby say?" vociferated the coachman. "Rob the house!—Damn me but I have a great inclination to pull your's down about your ears for your insolence."

The old lady, rather alarmed at his words, hastily withdrew, and closed the fast.

Mary-Jane, who had not the most distant idea of meeting with such a disappointment, now inwardly reproached herself for leaving Mrs. Melworth ere she had received an
answer

answer to her letters. What to do she knew not; the coachman became urgent for his money, and she had none to give him; her declaration of having lost her purse he now by no means credited, but believed it to have been uttered solely with an intent to cheat him of his fare, and he presently evinced as much, by exclaiming—“Come, come, Madam, I am not so easily to be choused—tip me the two shillings and sixpence, or I’ll charge the watch with you!”

Almost sinking to the earth with terror, she replied—“What can I do? Indeed I have told you the truth.—Oh God, once more deliver me from the perils and dangers that surround me!”

“I shall presently deliver you into the custody of those,” retorted the driver, “who will not prove the best companions in the world to a person in your situation, if you don’t instantly comply with my just demand. If you have been robbed, as you say you have, of your purse only, deposit something

something with me until you get a fresh supply. My coach is No. —, and when you bring or send me my due, you can have it again;—for instance now, that bauble on you finger.”

It was the ring she had found when exploring the deserted apartments in Barville Castle. In an instant she took it from her finger, gave it to him, and he departed.

Mary-Jane, now left by herself, without a six pence in her pocket, and unknowing where to proceed for refuge, the scalding tears of anguish and disappointment trickled from her eyes as she slowly moved from the door; when suddenly recollecting a widow lady, by the name of Mrs. Sourby, who had sometimes visited Radmill, and whose residence was but a short distance from his, she determined to proceed thither, acquaint that lady with her distress, and implore her protection until her friends again returned to London.

It

It was now about seven o'clock, in one of the dark, bleak evenings of December; the streets were wet and slippery, and the atmosphere so thick and misty, that the lights in the lamps were scarcely visible.

Mary-Jane, however, after some labour and difficulty, reached Mrs. Sourby's door, and soon after desired the footman, who opened it, to acquaint his mistress that Miss Radmill would be glad to speak a few words with her.

The footman bowed, and hastened with the message to his mistress, but soon returned, and addressed her as follows:—

“ Mrs. Sourby, Madam, desired me to inform you that she never was acquainted but with one Miss Radmill, and that lady having deserted her friends, and forfeited their protection, she can no longer receive her as she was wont to do; therefore, if you are the person her words allude to,

she desires you will quit her house immediately."

"Gracious powers!" exclaimed Mary-Jane, "deserted my friends, and forfeited their protection!—Shew me to Mrs. Sourby immediately!—You hesitate—I conjure you to comply with my request, that I may have an opportunity to rescue my character from obloquy, and prove myself still worthy her esteem!"

"I dare not," he peremptorily replied; "I must execute the orders I have received, or the loss of my place would be the consequence."—He then pushed her from the door, and closed it rudely after her.

Poor Mary-Jane, thus shut out, as it were, from the protection of all the world, without a place where she could rest her aching head, or shelter her shivering limbs from the cold, continued for some time fixed and immoveable with despair, gazing upon the house she had so unexpectedly been driven from; at last, clasping her
hands

hands in agony, she uttered—"Cruel, unfeeling woman!—Alas! where can I turn for refuge?"

"Into my arms!" exclaimed a voice just behind her.

The person from whom these words proceeded, advanced, and seized her hand. She shrieked; the voice sounded like Barville's.

"Good God!" he again rejoined, "do I behold Miss Radmill?"

She waited to hear no more, but instantly darted from him. He pursued her; but the darkness favoured her escape. She had already passed through several streets and courts, rushing through every turning that presented itself, until her strength being quite exhausted, she could proceed no further. Barville she imagined she heard still behind her; again some person took her hand; she gasped with terror; her senses were fast receding, when a female exclaimed

—“ Amazement! Miss Radmill alone, and in the streets on such a night as this!—Dear me, how you tremble! What has befallen you?—Can I be of any service to you?”

Mary-Jane, a little recovered on finding Barville had not overtaken her, as her fears at first suggested, now turned to the person who had thus addressed her, and tremulously ejaculated—“ Oh! in mercy, whoever you are, that Providence, no doubt, has sent to my relief, save me—save me from the evil I most dread!”

“ Save you! Aye, that I will. Come, let me conduct you to my dwelling—a dwelling, but for the kind assistance of the best of men, your honoured father, I had never been blessed with.—But come—dear me, how cold you are!—You seem ill—rest upon my arm for support;—there, come, be of good heart, and, God willing, all shall soon be well again!”

Mary-Jane, though she never remembered
to

to have seen, or heard before, the person who seemed thus disposed to serve her, hesitated not to accept of her proffered kindness; and as her residence was just by, they soon entered it together, where the care and attention of her humane conductress quickly restored her to a degree of ease and tranquillity.

“How shall I thank you,” uttered the weeping Mary-Jane, “for the service you have rendered me?”

“By taking another glass of this cordial. —Come, I am sure it will do you good; and then by telling me if in any other respect I can be of the least service to you.”

“To whom,” replied Mary-Jane, “am I indebted for so much friendship and civility?”

“To one whom your bountiful father raised from indigence, sheltered from oppression, and gave every comfort I now enjoy.”

Her name, she informed her, was Shipley, and related the manner in which she

had become acquainted with Radmill ; for she was the very person whom he had rescued from the inhumanity of the Beadle, as described in the second chapter of the first volume, and since that had provided her with the tenement she at present occupied, allowed her a weekly stipend for her support, until, by her industry and economy, she had contrived to open a green shop, which enabled her a few years after to purchase the house she lived in ; and, but for the positive refusal of her benefactor, to have repaid what his charitable heart had so seasonably bestowed.

Mary-Jane, though this was the first time she ever remembered to have seen Mrs. Shipley, had frequently heard Radmill and Henry mention the incidents she had just related, and praise her for the honesty and rectitude of her conduct and principles ; therefore she now considered her in the light of an old acquaintance, on whose friendship she might rely, and by whose assistance

assistance she hoped soon again to be restored to them.

Mary-Jane soon after related to Mrs. Shipley the strange manner in which she had been forced from Brighton, and what subsequently had befallen her, concealing only her horrid adventure amidst the ruins of Barville Castle. Her escape from it, her arrival in London, and, as she believed, her again so unexpectedly encountering Barville, she minutely dwelt on.

Mrs. Shipley listened with the profoundest attention, and as she concluded, exclaimed —“ Thank God, after all the perils and dangers you have escaped, you are now in a place of safety! Providence, no doubt, guided your footsteps to my habitation, that I might protect you from further insult, and to give me an opportunity of proving, to the best of men, I am not ungrateful for the favours I have received at his hand, by sheltering, providing, and returning to

him his dear, long-lost, and lamented child. How wretched must he have been in your absence!—But there, sorrow, when surmounted by virtuous efforts, carries its own reward; for, like sunshine after rain, we become more exhilarated, and pour forth our pious thanks to the Omnipotent Ruler, that he has safely conducted us through the threatening gloom, and once more blessed, animated, and enlivened his works.”

“How, my good Mrs. Shipley,” said Mary-Jane, “shall I be enabled to transmit a few lines to Mr. Radmill or Henry, to acquaint them of my present situation?”

“Oh, no doubt,” she replied, “ere long they will return to London; therefore I see no occasion for writing until tomorrow. If you will have the condescension, you can reside with me till you receive an answer; nothing, on my part, shall be wanting to make you cheerful and contented. I have a bed-room and parlour fortunately at this time not let; there you will

will be safe, retired, and, I trust, not unhappy."

Mary-Jane readily accepted this kind offer.

"Never," she exclaimed, "will I forget the obligation—never will I forget that I am indebted to you for more than life, as, but for your timely interference, ere this I might again have been dragged to the infamous residence of the wretch I have but so recently escaped from!—Almighty Father! in thee I trusted, and was safely delivered from the perils that surrounded me!"

Mrs. Shipley, on perceiving her quite tranquillized, and reconciled to her situation, advised her to retire to rest; which advice Mary-Jane was about to follow, when the street-door was forced open with some degree of violence, and several men rushed into the apartment in which they were sitting. Mary-Jane screamed, and
flew

flew to Mrs. Shipley for protection, who was hardly less alarmed than herself.

“Are you certain this is the house?” said one of them.

“Quite positive,” replied another; “and that young creature, who looks all innocence, I received it from.”

Mrs. Shipley now enquired their business, much wondering what could have induced them so abruptly to enter her habitation.

“Business enough!” exclaimed the first person that had spoken; “that young damsel,” pointing at Mary-Jane, “must go with us.”

“With you!” repeated Mrs. Shipley, while Mary-Jane pressed close to her, almost dying with affright; “never!—Keep off!—At your peril presume to offer any violence here!”

“At our peril be it then!” loudly vociferated another.

“You

"You had better desist!" again exclaimed Mrs. Shipley, "or you may repent your rashness when it is too late."

"Are you sure you are right?"

"I am ready to make oath of it," was answered to the person who interrogated.

"Then," he rejoined, "good woman, we, in the King's name, seize that young creature as our prisoner.—Resistance would be folly; therefore persuade her peaceably to go with us."

"What has she done?" tremulously enquired Mrs. Shipley; "and what authority have you thus rudely to enter my dwelling?"

"In the first place," he replied, "for your satisfaction be it known, we are Police Officers; and in the second, we have a warrant to apprehend the person this man shall point out to us," laying his hand upon the shoulder of the object next to him, "on suspicion of having committed a robbery, if not a murder."

"Murder! Robbery!" ejaculated
Mary-Jane

Mary-Jane, starting involuntarily from Mrs. Shipley, and fixing her eyes upon the group before her, not doubting but they would discover their mistake on obtaining a more distinct view of her person. The dreadful accusation inspired her with courage, as she had at first conjectured the intrusion to have originated in some new contrivance of Barville's.

“ Even so,” answered one of them.
“ This ring you will not deny, I presume, having given to this man but a short time since, when unable to pay the fare that was due to him for your conveyance from Charing-Cross to —— Street, in a hackney-coach.”

Mary-Jane, as he held the ring towards her, trembled violently ; the horrid spectacle she had beheld, as she stooped to pick it up in Barville Castle, recurred to her memory. Her evident confusion they misconstrued into certain symptoms of guilt ; and notwithstanding all that Mrs. Shipley could

could urge, either by threats or entreaties, more dead than alive, they forced the hapless Mary-Jane from her dwelling.

CHAP. V.

A Retrospect.

IT is now necessary we should take a retrospect, and learn how Radmill supported himself under his misfortunes, and what prevented his answering the letter Mary-Jane had written to him while with Mrs. Melworth.

Plagiary, ere the arrival of the physician, with pleasure, as he cast his eyes over the following

following note, which the servant delivered to him, saw his friend overcome the first emotions that had seized him when informed of Henry's departure.

“ HONOURED SIR,

“ No doubt you will be extremely surprised when you learn by these lines that I am on the road to London, and at a time when the agonizing suspense you are in for the loss of our poor Mary-Jane, required every possible endeavour of your son to administer consolation, and mitigate that anguish which too well I know will not easily be overcome. Yet surely you will forgive me when I acquaint you that I have received intelligence of Mary-Jane, and fly to extricate her from the dangers that surround her. If I may rely upon the information I have received, I shall soon again restore her to you. To have hastened and informed you of what I had heard, I will admit,

admit, ere I commenced my journey, would have been no more than the duty I owe to so kind a parent; but another circumstance, which you will know hereafter, though trifling in its nature, obliged me to depart in the abrupt manner I have done.—My dear Sir, accuse me of any thing but ingratitude, and undutiful conduct towards you, my best, my honoured, and esteemed friend. When we meet again, which in the course of a few days we certainly shall, I trust it will be to banish your fears, and myself to experience the most exquisite pleasure Providence can gratify me with, that of seeing you resigned and happy.

“ HENRY RADMILL.”

That Henry had heard something of Mary-Jane, partly reconciled Radmill to this last separation; and his promise of returning in a few days with her, had so visible an effect upon his spirits, that when the physician entered the room, he was too much

much recovered to need his advice or assistance; therefore he soon after retired, probably not best pleased with the disappointment.

Plagiary continued with him until a late hour in the evening, and the next morning waited upon him again, when Radmill apprized him of having sent a servant post-haste to town, with a letter to Barville, as he was anxious to be satisfied if that honest gentleman merited the opprobrious language in this instance, that had been uttered by Northcote.

Plagiary, though he saw the impropriety of this procedure, forbore to mention it, lest it should irritate, and render him more unhappy; for if Barville really was guilty, and found himself thus suspected, he would become doubly cautious to secure himself from being detected.

Sir Watkin Beverly and Eliza soon after
joined

joined them; and though much grieved themselves at the recent events, bestowed every comfort in their power to chase the melancholy symptoms of despondency from the breast of poor Radmill.

They had scarcely left him when Northcote entered; and, what was very unusual with this gentleman, he himself began a conversation, and afterwards had the patience to listen to Radmill's relation of Henry's strange, sudden, and unexpected departure, and to peruse the note he had received from him, when Radmill observed—"Henry, I am afraid, is too sanguine in his expectations of recovering Mary-Jane."

"I hope not," he replied.—"Yet why do I hope so? If Mary-Jane has voluntarily gone off with that reptile Barville, it were better you never saw her again."

"Impossible! Do not torture me with such horrid surmises!—I tell you Mary-Jane is all purity, all innocence, every thing I would
wish

with her to be; nor do I believe her at this moment to be less wretched than myself."

"Henry's conduct appears equally strange and undutiful."

"Every thing with you is strange, every thing undutiful; you put the worst construction upon every thing, and urge every thing you imagine will pain me to hear."

Northcote immediately withdrew; but toward the close of the next day visited him again. The servant, whom Radmill had dispatched with a letter to Barville, at that moment returned, and delivered his answer to his master.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, as his eye glanced over it, "our fears in one respect are at an end.—There, take it," said Radmill, holding it towards Northcote; "read, and be convinced."

Northcote having perused it, as he
returned

returned it to Radmill, exclaimed—"I have read it, but am by no means convinced."

"Have you any reason still to imagine your suspicions just?"

"A thousand."

"Name them."

"The atrocities he has formerly committed."

"Were he a thousand times more deeply immersed in sin than you conceive him to be, still of what you impute to him he may be innocent."

"And were he even better than I suspect, he might be guilty."

"Surely it is unjust to accuse him before we have good proof that he is deserving of it."

"I have."

"How?"

"I have said."

"When?"

"Not a minute since."

"Repeat it."

"His past enormities."

"You

“ You may be mistaken.”

“ So may you.”

“ You may injure his character.”

“ Impossible.”

“ Not if he be innocent?”

“ No.”

“ How so?”

“ He has none a good man would wish to acknowledge, or that his worst enemy can describe blacker than it is.”

“ He wishes me to acquaint him with the name of the person who has presumed to utter sentiments against him so unjust and insidious.”

“ Do so.”

“ Would you forgive me?”

“ Certainly.”

“ What shall I write?”

“ What you please.”

The servant now entered with a letter; the superscription was Henry's. Radmill with trepidation opened it, and read aloud as follows:—

“ HONOURED

“ HONOURED SIR,

“ The unpleasant affair which so immediately attached to myself, and which obliged me to quit Brighton so suddenly, I am happy to inform you is at an end;—would I could say as much for the dangers which encompass Mary-Jane! I have indubitable proof that she is with Barville. I am just returned from his house, where I learned that he had but a few hours since set off, with part of his family, into the country, but to what place could gain no information. I hope, however, soon to discover, when, I trust, I shall transmit to you more pleasing intelligence from your dutiful and affectionate son,

“ HENRY RADMILL.”

“ I was afraid,” despondently uttered Northcote, “ my fears were but too just.”

“What can be done?” sighed Radmill.
“Miserable, unhappy man that I am! I will set off for London immediately.”

“To what purpose?”

“Alas, I know not, except it be to die, and forget my sorrows in the grave.”

“You cannot do worse where you are.”

“What would you advise?”

“Patience.”

“My poor girl, I shall never behold her again!”

“If she be guilty, it were as well you never do.”

“Guilt and Mary-Jane!—Oh, it is impossible!”

“She is not the first that has been betrayed and ruined by the artifices of a villain.”

“And were she so, how gladly should this hand be extended to her relief! How gladly would I again press her to my heart, and, with the tender admonitions of a friend, recal her erring footsteps to those paths of virtue, rectitude, and peace she
so

so fatally had deviated from! Not an accent of reproach should escape my lips! Not a tear that started from her eye, but I would wipe away! I would bless the hand that restored her to me, and once more sit me down grateful and resigned!"

Northcote, the stern, the inflexible Northcote, was sensibly affected; a tear, spite of his endeavours to repress it, trembled in his eye as he ejaculated—"And wouldst thou again shelter the poor orphan thy benevolent heart raised from indigence, and dignified with every virtue that would have ensured her everlasting happiness, had she not listened to the destructive insinuations of vice, which induced her, forgetful of past obligations, to fly from thee as hadst thou been her most deadly foe, resign all future pretension to thy favour and regard, and voluntarily embrace infamy and ruin?"

"I would reclaim, I would make her sensible of her errors, and she should be my Mary-Jane again!"

“ Would the relentless, the unforgiving parents but profit by your instruction, when the poor, deluded victims of seduction, sensible of their indiscretions, kneel penitent at their feet, and supplicate to be forgiven, what horrors might not be avoided, what pangs would they not themselves escape! For when extended on that bed, from which they never again shall rise, reflection must tell them that should their Almighty Father be as rigid towards them as they have been to their own offspring, they never can escape perdition.”

“ Suppose a daughter of thine, covered with shame, and penitent at thy feet, inflexible as thou art, couldst thou forgive her? Wouldst thou raise her up, wipe the tears of anguish from her pallid cheek, teach her to reform, and again make her happy in thy smiles?”

Northcote became much agitated; he once had a daughter; a numerous train of sad ideas memory conjured up to torture him.

MARY-JANE.

him. He was too much overcome to reply, but rushed precipitately and disconsolately from the house.

Several days elapsed, when Radmill received another letter from Henry; which, however, like the former epistles he had transmitted, mentioned his researches after Barville and Mary-Jane to have been without success, and his determination not to return to him until he had discovered them, which he as yet did not despair of effecting.

Radmill's spirits could ill brook such repeated disappointments. Grief had already made considerable encroachments on his constitution. Sir Watkin Beverly, Eliza, and Plagiary, who were almost incessantly with him, vainly endeavoured to inspire him with hope, fortitude, and resignation. Almost broken-hearted, he appeared fast verging toward that bourn "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Northcote was now often to be seen with him; he persuaded him to relinquish his intention of returning to town until things wore a more favourable aspect.

Several days more passed cheerlessly away. Respecting the fate of Mary-Jane they were still in the most painful uncertainty. Northcote was upon the point of journeying to town to assist Henry in his endeavours to discover Barville, when the event in the next chapter unexpectedly procrastinated his design, and added fresh tortures to the agonies he already was struggling to overcome.

CHAP. VI.

The Penitent.

“Quem poenitet peccasse poenæ est innocens.”

ONE evening, as Northcote was taking his course towards Radmill's, a poor woman, the meager object of distress and famine, approached him, and petitioned him to bestow a trifle to relieve a wretch almost dying for the want of food. He started at the sound of her voice; then fixing his eyes on the woe-worn object, he beheld, with speechless surprise, the very person with whom his child was entrusted when they so mysteriously disappeared from Rook-dale

Abbey. Near forty years had elapsed since he had last seen her, yet were her features not forgotten. The poor creature, at the same moment, seemed to recollect her old master. She recoiled with horror; the glow of guilt overspread her pale cheeks; she screamed, and endeavoured to fly from him. Northcote sprung after her; terror overcame her, and she dropped, gasping for life, at his feet.

Several people, who had beheld what passed between them, now came forward, and enquired what had so suddenly alarmed them both. Northcote was some time ere he could articulate a word, when, as they raised the miserable woman on her feet, he exclaimed—"Beldam! murderers! what became of my child?"

"Oh God!" she energetically pronounced, "how just art thou in all thy ways! My offence was too heinous to escape thy wrath! Much have I already suffered—pity and relieve the torments I endure! A
short

short time longer to have escaped this dreaded interview, and I had hid me from his vengeance in the grave!"

"Murderefs!" again vociferated Northcote, "my child! my child! How disposed you of my child?"

“ I am no murderers!” she feebly replied. “ Conduct me to some place where, undisturbed, I may recount to you what you most wish to know, and soon you shall be satisfied.”

Northcote soon prevailed upon those who had raised her from the ground, to bear her to Radmill's; when, having liberally rewarded them for their trouble, they left her with himself and Radmill, who for a moment forgot his recent calamity to listen to what she had to relate; when she soon after began as follows:—

“ You may remember, Sir, that on your having occasion to engage a person for the express purpose of nursing your child, and

having, during Mrs. Northcote's illness, the sole care of the infant, I was recommended to you by Mr. Elmley, your Honour's kinsman, and heir at law to most of your estates, should you die without issue. He it was that seduced me from my duty; for on learning by yourself that you believed Mrs. Northcote would never recover, he wrought upon me, by offering me a reward of fifty pounds, and a promise of his future support, on the death of my mistress, secretly to convey my charge to his residence.

“ He at that time resided in the neighbourhood of Rook-dale, and spent the most of his time with your Honour, and feigned himself as much grieved at the sickness and approaching dissolution of your good Lady, as those most attached to her.—However, to be brief.—When the expected event occurred, I took advantage of the general distress and confusion that prevailed within the house, and, I believe, unobserved by any one, reached Mr. Elmley's dwelling with
the

the child, and was by him most gladly received.

“ For three months was I closely concealed in an obscure room in the house. A female servant, whom he had likewise bribed to secrecy, and who supplied us with every necessary, was the only person, exclusive of ourselves, that was ever to this day privy to the affair; and so blinded were you by the apparent sorrow of Mr. Elmley, together with his seeming endeavours to discover what had become of your daughter, that you never once suspected the treacherous part he had so successfully performed.

“ At the expiration of three months we were conveyed to London. We left Rookdale in the middle of the night; and having taken every requisite precaution to avoid being detected, we fortunately, (at least as I then thought), unmolested, reached our destination.

“ A first floor in a small house in Swallow Street had been hired for me. I continued there a few months, when I

took lodgings in another part of the town, fearful that a residence too long in one place should create a suspicion of who and what I was, that might in the end lead to a discovery of my perfidy. In this way I securely passed upwards of seventeen years; during which time Mr. Elmley had regularly remitted to me twenty-five pounds quarterly, with which sum I was enabled to live in a tolerable degree of ease and credit; and could I have expunged from my memory the crime I had committed, should have been comfortable and contented, whereas I was hourly tortured with the idea of being detected, and receiving the punishment I deserved.

“ It was Mr. Elmley’s intention, when we removed from Rook-dale to London, to have the child left at the gate of the Foundling Hospital, but to this measure I strenuously objected. I felt an affection for her that induced me not so readily to resign her; and besides, by keeping her in my own power I ensured the punctual

5 payment

payment of my quarterly allowance ; as, in default of which, he conjectured, no doubt, and rightly, I should return with her to Rook-dale, when it was probable the joy you would experience at again beholding your daughter, might not only ensure my forgiveness, but a provision equal to what I had received as the wages of treachery and sin, and a total abolition of his expectancies.

“ Mr. Elmley, finding that I persisted in opposing such a procedure, was at last obliged to submit. I adopted the child, passed for the widow of a Naval Officer, and changed my name from Smith to Stevens. I kept no company ; for ten years was hardly ever to be seen in the streets ; my whole employment was concentrated in the education of my child, for as such from the time I quitted Rook-dale I considered her. Such masters to teach and instruct her, as my income would allow, I procured for her ; and well did Margaret, the name I had given her, profit under their tuition.

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She grew the perfect image of her mother; and had you seen her at a period when just turned of seventeen, I much doubt whether it would not have led to a discovery of my baseness.

“ Time, however, subdued the fears of being detected, and I at last ventured to appear in public with her. She never knew but I was her mother, and consequently looked upon me as her only friend.

“ I at this time resided in Oxford-Street. A military gentleman, who had apartments in the same house, struck with the beauty and figure of Margaret, would frequently request permission to pass a few hours with us. To this, as we were rather in want of society, I by no means objected. I was pleased with his attention, and Margaret appeared never so happy as when he was with us; in short, they soon became so much attached to each other, that a proposal of making her his by marriage was the consequence. This was secretly the wish of my own heart; for the dreadful
state

state she would be left in, should death take me from her, was a source of perpetual uneasiness to me; therefore, finding her not averse to enter the connubial state with Mr. Barville——”

“ With whom ? ” exclaimed Northcote and Radmill at the same instant.

“ With Barville,” she replied; “ the eldest son of Sir Benjamin Barville, of Somersetshire.”

Northcote paced the room in agony; when Radmill, who sat all astonishment, at last desired her to proceed.

“ Well,” she continued, “ to tire your patience as little as possible, and in a few words to finish my melancholy narrative, they were married; and Mr. Barville soon after dispatched a letter to his brother, desiring him to acquaint his father of what he had done. A few days subsequent to this his brother arrived in London; he had received the letter, complied with its contents,

tents, and informed him that his father was so much enraged with the step he had taken, that he had determined never to speak to him, or, if possible, think of him any more. This was sad news for poor Barville; his brother behaved very kind to him, and tried to dissipate his chagrin; made him some valuable presents, and when he left London, received a letter from Barville to deliver to his father, and promised to use his utmost efforts to bring about a reconciliation; until which time he admonished him not to return to Somersetshire.

“ Soon after his departure, Mr. Barville received orders to join his regiment, and he and Margaret left me. I had written and informed Mr. Elmley of every occurrence. With Margaret's marriage he expressed himself well satisfied, and enjoined me to preserve inviolably the secret of her birth, and my quarterly allowance, so long as I lived, should be punctually attended to.

Margaret, with her husband, had left London about six months, when I received
a let-

a letter from him, which informed me that his regiment was ordered to the West-Indies, and that they expected to sail in the course of a few days; therefore requested me, as Margaret and himself wished much to see me ere they left England, to join them at Portsmouth as soon as possible, as it would not be in his power to get leave of absence to return to London. He likewise acquainted me that his father still continued much incensed against him; and, notwithstanding he had frequently written to him, could never obtain an answer to one of his letters.

At the time this arrived, the last epistle I ever received from either of them, I had been for many days confined to my bed by sickness; and the doctor who attended me, judging that I was not in a situation to peruse it, gave it me not until three weeks afterwards, when the fever under which I suffered was quite subdued, and he had pronounced me in a convalescent state. Weak as I then was, I would have set off for
Portsmouth

Portsmouth the moment I had read it, had not the doctor, whom I informed of my motive for the journey, taken a newspaper from the table he had just before been examining, and convinced me that the ship, with the regiment in which I had told him Mr. Barville was, had sailed ten days before.

“ I was much hurt and disappointed at this information; but it was irremediable, and I was obliged to submit. At this period my quarterly allowance from Mr. Elmley had been due several weeks; I much wondered at the delay, as until that time he had ever transmitted it to me by the post with the utmost punctuality: but, alas! too soon was I apprized of the occasion of it.—Mr. Elmley had been suddenly taken ill, and, without making any provision for me, died. This I learned likewise by the papers; and not long after, by the same channel, that the ship in which Mr. Barville and Margaret had embarked, had foundered at sea, and all on board had perished!”

Northcote

Northcote groaned aloud; Radmill endeavoured to comfort him; while the poor creature, who had given rise to these emotions, dropped on her knees, and adjured him not to curse her. He fixed his eyes upon her emaciated form; she trembled, and faintly exclaimed—"Oh forgive, forgive me ere I die! Providence has already hurled his first and mighty vengeance on my head! Margaret's death did I most truly lament! My fixed resolve of restoring to you your child, should Elmley die, was thus awfully prevented.—Beggary stared me in the face! The debts I had contracted in my illness took from me every six-pence I had in the world; even my clothes I was obliged to part with to procure me subsistence, when I at last succeeded in again obtaining a situation in a gentleman's family: but, alas! there I continued but a short time ere I again had to seek another. Nothing ever went well with me. To return to my parish, and crave assistance there, I imagined was soon to have my guilt revealed.

revealed. You I dreaded more than ever to encounter. For these last five years no person would employ me, and I have subsisted merely upon what those, struck with my miserable appearance, have humanely bestowed on me. Barefooted have I travelled over almost all parts of England. Oh then, may the insults I have received, the hardship, toil, and distress I have endured, augmented and rendered doubly insupportable by the terrible upbraidings of an accusing conscience, expiate my crime, procure me your pardon, that I may drop into the grave in peace!"

Quite exhausted with speaking so long, she fell almost lifeless at his feet. Radmill conceived her to be dying; he instantly rang the bell for some of his household to hasten to her relief, when they conveyed her into another room, soon again restored her to life and recollection, and waited for orders how further to proceed.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

A Journey to Somersetshire.

NORTHCOTE, notwithstanding the anguish he endured while listening to the foregone narrative, and the resentment he must naturally feel for the authors of his sufferings, could not look upon the poor, miserable, repentant object before him but with an eye of compassion. Elmley, the treacherous Elmley, whom he had esteemed as his best, his worthiest friend, but now too late convinced of the contrary, was beyond his reach; he had been summoned, at a moment unexpected, unrepentant of his crimes, to appear before that great, omnipotent, and
impartia.

impartial Judge, from whom no action of our lives can be concealed, there to receive that sentence which must either eternally seat him in the realms of bliss, or consign him to torments everlasting. He shuddered as his thoughts reverted to his sudden dissolution; and, unable to reply, beheld the servants bear the emaciated woman from his presence, a deplorable conviction of the miseries we engender, if not proof against the temptations of the wicked, when they offer the golden bait to decoy us into the commission of sin, and implant the agonizing venom of remorse in our hearts, eventually to sink us into an untimely grave, unlamented and despised.

A mournful silence for some time prevailed; when at last Radmill thus addressed him:—

“ My good friend, do not thus despond; it is some satisfaction that the mystery, which enveloped the fate of your daughter,
is

is elucidated;—she is happy; then to the will of Providence let us strive to be resigned! Could we but find our Mary-Jane, she should supply the place of the daughter you have lost; she yet may live to bless us both; and I am well convinced she preserves an affection for you equal to what she has ever cherished towards myself.”

Northcote was softened. That Radmill should endeavour to forget his own sufferings, and speak comfort to him, was an instance of friendship, but rarely to be met with. He advanced towards him; an indescribable sensation thrilled upon his heart, and moistened his eye with a tear, as he articulated—“It shall be so! But then——”

“What then?—Come, come, the next intelligence we receive from Henry may disperse our doubts, and Mary-Jane be our’s again.”

A servant entered, and informed them of
the

the recovery of the poor wretch in the next room.

Radmill desired him to remove her into the kitchen, bestow every attention her distressed situation required, assure her that she had nothing to apprehend from them, and that when she became tranquillized, he would speak with her again.

The servant withdrew, and Radmill again addressed himself to Northcote.

“ You are acquainted with Sir Benjamin Barville ;—had he a son besides the person who so justly merits our abhorrence and contempt ?”

“ He had ; and well do I remember the circumstance of the vessel being lost in which he sailed for the West Indies.”

“ Was his father, for marrying contrary to his wishes, so inflexibly determined never to behold him again ?”

“ In that particular I cannot answer you ;
this

this I know, Sir Benjamin has, with the most poignant concern, lamented that his eldest son should have forgotten his parent; and when he quitted England, never, alas! to return, without even bidding him a last adieu, it nearly broke his heart."

"Strange and incomprehensible this!—He knew not of his marriage then?—I begin to suspect the narrative we have been listening to is in some measure devoid of truth."

"I have an opinion quite opposite."

"How can you reconcile the contradiction? It has been imputed solely to Sir Benjamin that——"

"Suppose we leave Brighton to-morrow, and travel together to his residence in Somersetshire? The papers have some time announced him much recovered from the disorder, which most people imagined would end but with his life; I shall not be satisfied until——"

"But Mary-Jane, my poor Mary-Jane! Should Henry return in our absence——"

“ He can follow us immediately into Somersetshire.”

Radmill was some time ere he consented to this proposal of Northcote's; he, however, at last prevailed upon him, and a letter was immediately sent to the post-office for Henry, whose present address in London they had some time since received.

For the miserable victim of guilt and shame, that had incited them to this sudden removal, they hired an apartment, leaving one servant to take care of her until they had visited Sir Benjamin, of which they were to receive proper notice, and then immediately set out for Radmill's residence in town.

The following day, having taken leave of Sir Watkin Beverly and Plagiary, and settled other necessary matters, with spirits quite the reverse of those with which he had entered Brighton, Radmill began his journey,
with

with Northcote, towards Somersetshire, where, in due time, they arrived, and found Sir Benjamin much better in health than from his recent illness might have been expected.

Sir Benjamin was much gratified in beholding an old friend, whom he had not seen for some years, and, with Radmill, gave him a most cordial reception, expressing a wish that they were come to spend a few weeks with him, as he was much in want of such a friendly society.

Northcote having declared his intention of continuing with him at least for a few days, orders were given that Radmill's servants might be properly attended to; when having seated themselves, Northcote thus addressed himself to Sir Benjamin:—

“Have you seen your son lately, Sir Benjamin?”

“Alas! no,” he replied, “not since
F 2 his

his marriage, now better than thirteen years ago, though I frequently hear accounts of him that give me more pain than pleasure in listening to. His wife and children, since his cruel desertion of them, have chiefly resided with me; they are the only comforts left me."

"Excuse me, Sir Benjamin," said Radmill, "for touching upon so melancholy a subject, but I have particular reasons—was your eldest son, Lieutenant Barville, who was lost in his passage to the West-Indies, married?"

"I believe not; if he were, he concealed that circumstance from me, as he did every other occurrence for the last twelvemonth of his life. What induced him to treat me with so much indifference and neglect, I know not; never had he any just cause from me to adopt such behaviour, nor, but in the present instance, gave he his father an opportunity of pronouncing him either ungrateful or disobedient. I cannot even now reflect upon his strange conduct but
with

with the most painful regret, that his deviation from the path of rectitude, which until then he had so nobly trod, should have induced him to have left his native country without one wish, one enquiry, or even granting his parent one last adieu at parting. Lady Barville, at this period, had been dead more than five years, so that I had no friend to console me in my distress, which nearly hurried me to the grave."

"Your other son," observed Northcote, "was with you at this time?"

"He was; but he rather contributed to increase than lessen my sufferings; he had been with his brother some months before in London, and the account he gave me of him was terrible. He informed me that his time was spent in a regular succession of debauchery, and that he had declared to him that unless I would oftener remit him supplies of cash, to enable him to persist in his improvident career, he never wished to behold me again. I was horror-struck, as you may imagine, at this intelligence,

gence, and doubted if I had heard aright. Francis repeated the words again. I was at this time confined to my room with the gout, or I would on the instant have set off for town; as it was, I could only write to him. I urgently advised him to get leave of absence, and hasten to me; which, should he find any difficulty in accomplishing, to part with his commission, as I had something of great importance to communicate to him, which admitted not of a moment's delay. This letter I gave to Francis, to deliver at the post-office for him; but I never received an answer to it. Again I wrote; and after that a third and a fourth time, but all to the same effect. I heard that his regiment was drafted for the West-Indies.—‘Surely,’ I exclaimed, ‘he will not leave England without bidding me adieu!’—But I was mistaken; I neither saw nor heard of him any more until I learned the sad catastrophe which consigned him to a watery grave!”

“ Did

"Did his brother," said Northcote,
"ever receive any letters from him?"

"Never."

"Not one?"

"No, not one."

"How were you assured of this?"

"By himself. But why are you thus minute in your enquiries?"

"Because I suspect your son Francis has deceived you."

"That he has deceived me often I will grant; but in this particular what purpose could it answer?"

"That is best known to himself. However, attend to what I am about to relate to you, the truth of which I will vouch for, and my friend Radmill likewise can testify the fact; and then decide for yourself."

Northcote then repeated to him what he had so recently learned, respecting his daughter, at Brighton; the mysterious manner in which he had lost her, he had recounted to him many years before. Her

marriage with his son, and his brother visiting him in London, tallied exactly with the time he acknowledged to have seen him. Sir Benjamin became extremely agitated, and as Northcote concluded, exclaimed—"Surely, surely Francis never can have been so vile, so treacherous! When, and from whom, gained you this information?"

"A few days since, and from one who, tottering on eternity's dread brink, could hardly have been wrought upon to declare a falsehood."

Their conversation was suddenly interrupted by the arrival of Mrs. Barville and her two youngest children; the one a fine blooming girl, about ten years old—the other a well-looking boy, a twelvemonth younger; her two eldest, both boys, were at the University of Oxford. Mrs. Barville was about five-and-thirty, of an interesting appearance, which the melancholy remembrance of the ill-treatment she had experienced from
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her husband, and the sad accounts she had heard of him since he had abandoned her, suffusing a languor over her features, which were beautiful and expressive, rather increased than diminished.

She continued with them some time. Northcote and Radmill were delighted with her; her obliging carriage towards Sir Benjamin, the tender regard she betrayed for her children, and her easy and refined behaviour towards themselves, gave them so high an opinion of her understanding, that Barville, who had treated her so inhumanly, if possible, sunk lower in their estimation.

“Poor thing!” exclaimed Sir Benjamin, when, with her children, she withdrew, “she is deserving of a better fate!—I know not what I should do without her; she is all the world to me.—May she prove more fortunate in her children than I have been! May she never regret that Providence has

raised her a family; but in the happiness she finds with them, forget the brutal conduct of their father!"

Their former conversation was soon after renewed; and so much was Sir Benjamin astonished and affected with what Northcote and Radmill revealed to him, and was so anxious to have the matter thoroughly investigated, that he resolved, as soon as his health became more established, to set out for London, surprise his son by his presence, and oblige him to acknowledge what motive had induced him to behave so treacherously to his brother.

This was precisely what Northcote wished, which he soon gave him to understand; and promised to remain with him until he was in a situation, with safety, to make such a journey, when his friend Radmill and himself would accompany him.

Northcote had designed not too suddenly
to

to apprise Sir Benjamin of the villany his son had so successfully practised on Mary-Jane; but Radmill, who could not for a moment banish her from his mind, involuntarily uttered a few incautious words on the subject, and an explanation became absolutely necessary.

Sir Benjamin listened in silence until they had finished, though his countenance sufficiently evinced the torture he endured, when he exclaimed—"Oh God! how have I merited thus to be afflicted?—Unnatural boy, was it for this I watched thy infant years, and, with the exultation of a fond parent, saw thee ripen into manhood? Was it for this I strove to inculcate into thy youthful mind the pure precepts of piety and virtue? Was it for this thou endeavoured to ruin thy brother in my esteem, that I might more acutely feel thy baseness?—Inhuman, degenerate boy, it had been better for thee hadst thou never been born!"

Northcote and Radmill, though so ill qualified from the poignancy of their own feelings, endeavoured to speak comfort to him; and Mrs. Barville soon after joining them, lest she should suspect that his unhappiness originated in having received more unfavourable intelligence of her husband, he affected a cheerfulness but too foreign to his heart.

Sir Benjamin had been so much shocked with what he had heard on the preceding evening, that his health, which had been long in a very precarious state, on the following morning was much worse; and his journey to London appeared likely to be procrastinated to a greater length of time than he had at first suspected.

Radmill's spirits were in no wise improved; and Northcote, who from the recent occurrences, had diverged from his usual taciturnity and acerbity, was far from being happier in the alteration.

Mrs.

Mrs. Barville, much alarmed at this sudden change in Sir Benjamin, was almost incessantly with him; and he, in fact, was so much attached to her and her children, that he could hardly bear to be left a minute without them.

Northcote and Radmill continued with Sir Benjamin upwards of three weeks ere his health would permit him to fix the day for his journey to town, and which even then was prevented by a letter from Henry, which announced to them that he had obtained intelligence that Barville, with Mary-Jane, had retired into Wales, whither he was about to follow them. In consequence of which, Northcote prevailed upon Sir Benjamin and Radmill, in lieu of London, to accompany him to Rook-dale Abbey, which was in Wales likewise, and only ten miles distant from Barville Castle; though Sir Benjamin was so totally ignorant of the alteration his son had made in the latter structure, that the ruinous state
he

he conceived it to be in, would have induced him to search every part of Wales to obtain an interview with him, ere he would have conceived it requisite to visit that spot.

CHAP. VIII.

LETTER IV.

Mr. Northcote to Mrs. Moxebray.

“ A FEW days, my amiable cousin, and I shall be with you. Radmill and Sir Benjamin Barville, both of whom, by former letters, you are in a manner acquainted with,

with, will accompany me;—the latter having recently recovered from a severe indisposition, will require much of your attention, as, indeed, we shall all of us. Mary-Jane we have not been able to recover though we have received certain proof that she absconded with Barville, and it is believed that they are at this time in Wales, but in what part secrecy envelopes; which the principal design of our journey at present is, if possible, to unfold. Heaven prosper our endeavours! or, would it be more prudent to petition the Almighty that they ever may elude our vigilance? for to find them may be to confirm our fears, and to establish what I cannot avoid suspecting, that Mary-Jane is guilty?—Poor Radmill! such a confirmation would indeed hurry him to despair. His health is rapidly declining—at times he is inconsolable; nor is Sir Benjamin hardly less so when his thoughts revert to the iniquitous conduct of his son. For myself—Oh Mrs. Mowbray! I
have

have a tale to tell which will freeze thy blood to hear.—Our kinsman, Elmley, whom we have oft lamented, was the most treacherous, the most vile!—But he is no more! He murdered my peace, but I forgive him!—God, I hope, has forgiven him also.—When we meet, which we shortly shall, I will acquaint you with every particular; until that time I once more affectionately bid you adieu!”

CHAP. IX.

The Female Gamester.

IT is now requisite that the reader should be informed of some circumstances relative to Henry Radmill, which will account for his sudden removal from Brighton, to the utter astonishment of his father, when his presence would have contributed to console him in the absence of Mary-Jane.

Henry, as described in the first chapter of this work, expressed his reluctance to accompany his father into the country so early as the old gentleman proposed; and vainly endeavoured to prevail upon him to defer

defer his intention for a few weeks, though his motive for wishing his father to procrastinate his journey he refused to make known, which so irritated him, that he obliged Henry, against his will, to set off with him for Brighton on the following morning, as a proper punishment for his obstinacy and undutiful conduct.

The cause, however, of Henry's disinclination to leave London so soon, and which he then refused to reveal, it is now necessary to explain.

Mrs. Sourby, whom we have mentioned as being on friendly terms with Radmill, on the death of her husband finding herself in possession of about three hundred pounds a-year, which he had realized in pursuing the occupation of a fishmonger, conceived it a sufficiency, as she had no children, for her future support, and retired from business; but soon finding a life of indolence by no means suitable to her disposition, and
being

being often invited to pass an evening with some few with whom she had contrived to get acquainted, whose fortunes were infinitely superior to her own, it not only implanted in her bosom an unconquerable desire for an incessant routine of the amusements they pursued to kill time, but an envious wish to exceed them in expence and parade at her own house, when these visits were necessarily to be returned. For which purpose the establishment of her household, which consisted of only three female servants, and a boy in livery, experienced a considerable augmentation; two footmen, a butler, &c. &c. were presently engaged, and the pleasing prospect of living after the rate of fifteen hundred pounds per annum, presented itself, when she knew that she had little better than the fifth part of that sum to support it.

This improvident career she pursued for some years, having, at the expiration of every

every twelvemonth, during that time, been necessitated to part with some hundreds of her capital, which was solely invested in the Five per Cents., that at this epoch the interest of what remained scarcely amounted to twenty-five pounds quarterly.

At this crisis she began to review her conduct with agony and remorse. To persevere in such thoughtless extravagance in a few years more must deprive her of every six-pence she had in the world. What could be done to retrieve her circumstances, or, at least, avert the impending danger?—The house she lived in was her own; this, however, was some consolation, and which she prudently determined (if possible to retain in her possession) never to part with; yet, in the deranged state of her affairs, she knew not what hereafter necessity might not oblige her to do. And how was it to be avoided? To reduce her establishment to a parallel with her means, appeared the most likely method to save her from ruin; but

but prudence had no sooner suggested this to her terrified imagination, than pride rejected it, and an idea immediately presented itself that the gaming-table might retrieve her shattered fortune. It seemed her only resource; and she determined to risk every thing, in hopes to profit by it.

At most of the places where she associated, cards constituted the evening amusement; and, from her constant attendance at them, she believed herself an adept at most of the games that were generally introduced, though the dread of losing her money had hitherto withheld her from venturing much upon them: but now she determined to surmount her fears, and, if Fortune favoured her, to become a professed gamester. In short, the evening succeeding the day in which she had formed this resolution, she carried it into execution. She accepted every bet that was offered, and made some considerable wagers herself with the gentlemen, who were much astonished at this sudden

sudden alteration in her conduct, and inwardly pitied and blamed her for her temerity. However, at the conclusion of the evening, Mrs. Sourby, to her inexpressible satisfaction, found herself the winner of two hundred and twenty guineas. This was encouragement beyond her most sanguine expectations; therefore she determined to pursue this dangerous practice, and severely reproached herself for not beginning some years sooner, not doubting but she would have been equally successful, and ere this might have been enabled to keep her carriage, and not obliged to purchase the assistance of an hackney-coach upon every occasion.

For several weeks Fortune continued to smile upon her; and believing, from such unexpected and repeated success, that she should never experience any reverse, was actually on the eve of appointing a person to purchase a handsome pair of horses for her, at Tatterfall's, and to bespeak her a chariot
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suited to her rank and splendour in life, when one unlucky evening obliged her to suspend these air-built schemes of grandeur. It did not, however, induce her to relinquish play, but rather increased her desire, trusting she should shortly meet with an opportunity of recovering her losses, till at last she was not only deprived of every thing she had previously acquired in this dangerous pursuit, but found herself one thousand pounds in debt to a Mrs. Squander, who very obligingly promised to call shortly at her house for payment.

In such a dilemma what was to be done? Repentance came too late. It was a debt of honour, and must be paid as soon as demanded. Out of six thousand pounds she formerly possessed, two thousand only remained; and the Stocks at this time being extremely low, she must not only sell out at a great loss, but what would remain, even with the most rigid economy, would not be a sufficiency for her support. With
hasty

hasty and perturbed paces she continued for some time, in all the agony of remorse, to traverse her apartment, when Henry Radmill, as was frequently his custom, made her a visit.

Henry, on perceiving her so extremely agitated, as might be expected, enquired what it was that had occurred to distress her; a flood of tears was all the answer she could make him. Henry was much affected, and taking her kindly by the hand, entreated her to be composed.

“ Oh Mr. Radmill !” she at last exclaimed, “ in me you behold one of the most unfortunate of her sex!—Oh God! what will become of me? Yet, had I a friend who would advise and assist me, my difficulties might easily be surmounted.”

“ Good Heavens! Mrs. Sourby,” said Henry, “ what can have rendered you so unhappy? Is it in my power to be of the

least service to you? If it is, you may command me."

This was precisely the offer Mrs. Sourby waited for, as she had determined in her own mind, as soon as Henry was announced, to make him acquainted with as much of her embarrassed situation as might induce him to pity her, and to make an offer of assisting her to the utmost of his ability; therefore, having informed him that her uneasiness originated from pecuniary matters, concluded by requesting of him the loan of a thousand pounds for a month.

Mrs. Sourby, ere she solicited this sum of Henry, was well aware, should he refuse her, there was no other person she could apply to, and consequently the deranged state of her affairs must soon be publicly known;—on the contrary, should he comply with her request, the impending blow for the present would be averted, and another

trial at the card table might prove more propitious to her wishes, and enable her to repay him at the stipulated period.

Henry was too astonished immediately to reply. He wished to serve her; but without applying to his father, how was he to raise such a sum? and such an application she had artfully prohibited, as, ere she acquainted him with her distress, she enjoined him to keep what she was about to utter a profound secret, observing she would much rather transfer her property in the Funds, though at such an immense loss, than a third person should be apprized of her embarrassment.

She likewise gave Henry to understand, (judging that his astonishment proceeded from a reluctance to part with so much money), that she had lent twelve hundred pounds but a few days before to a friend, not imagining she should have so immediate an occasion for it herself, and which she
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should receive again ere the month expired, for which she wanted the sum in question.

Henry, who believed every word she had uttered, soon after left her, having first repeated his promise not to disclose what she had in confidence revealed to him; and likewise, if possible, to procure the money for her on the following day.

Henry was for a considerable time at a loss, in his present emergency, to whom to apply, when a Mr. Faulkland, a school-fellow of his, whose father was lately dead, and had left him an ample fortune, recurred to his memory; he instantly waited upon him, was in a most friendly manner received, and on his hinting to him that he had a pressing occasion for the loan of one thousand pounds, Mr. Faulkland gave him a draft upon his banker for the sum, taking Henry's note at one month. This Mr. Faulkland would willingly have dispensed with, and have been satisfied with his word

to repay him when convenient ; but Henry, judging Mrs. Sourby would be punctual with him, on no other conditions would he receive the draft.

Henry immediately returned to Mrs. Sourby, who with extreme pleasure took the draft from him ; nor was Henry less elated that he had been so successful in his efforts to serve her. He soon after again withdrew, having only a verbal promise from her that she would return the favour ere the month expired, and as she proposed no security, Henry demanded none ; for judging of her by himself, he conceived a promise to be equally binding, as had all the attornies in Christendom been consulted and employed on the occasion.

A few days after the above affair, Henry, with Radmill and Mary-Jane, were invited to spend the evening at Mrs. Squander's ; the two latter declined going, but Henry, at the desire of Radmill, attended.—“ For,”
observed

observed his father, "as Mrs. Squander has been so considerate as to name us all, though we are but little acquainted, let it not appear that we absented ourselves through a desire of not becoming more intimate with her and her friends."

Henry accordingly attended; Mrs. Sourby was there likewise, as were many others that he was on friendly terms with. He passed the major part of the evening at whist, a game he was very partial to, for the moderate sum of half-crown points; and as it so happened that the party at his table seemed equally satisfied with himself with the sum they were playing for, he had no conception of the money that was won and lost at the other end of the room, until a lady, who seemed to have just left off play, drew a chair close to his partner's, and spoke, just loud enough for those immediately about her to hear—"I protest poor Mrs. Sourby, if the same ill-luck which she has

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recently

recently met with continues much longer, will be inevitably ruined."

"I am astonished," exclaimed the lady addressed, "she has not more prudence! — Who wins her money to-night?"

"Mrs. Squander, as usual."

"The last time they were engaged, I understand Mrs. Sourby parted in Mrs. Squander's debt upwards of a thousand pounds."

"I have heard as much. Do you think she has paid her yet?"

"Upon my life I am not able to say; but I should imagine that she had, for I know Mrs. Squander too well to conceive she would risk a second account ere her adversary had discharged the first."

"How great a sum is Mrs. Squander the winner of to-night?"

"When I just now left the table which is next to her's, I heard her exclaim, as it was the conclusion of a rubber—'This, Mrs. Sourby, makes it just four hundred pounds.'

"A few

“ A few more such losses, and it will be all over with her; for I have been informed, and I believe from tolerable authority, that out of seven or eight thousand pounds, which she formerly had in the Funds, scarcely two remain; and if she has so lately paid the debt of honour due to Mrs. Squander, that must be dwindled to something less than one.—Dear me, Mr. Radmill, I beg your pardon!—clubs was led, I believe—who trumped?—But there, I have one of the suit, so it does not matter.—In what kind of spirits did you leave Mrs. Sourby, my dear Madam?”

“ Oh tolerable; in much better spirits, circumstances considered, than might altogether be expected. She will not feel her losses until she once more gets her head upon her pillow; reflection at such times generally visits us uninvited, and makes us acutely feel the follies we have committed in the course of the day.”

They continued discoursing on the success

of Mrs. Squander, and the thoughtless imprudence of Mrs. Sourby for a considerable time longer; and evinced to Henry, who listened attentively to their conversation, that Mrs. Sourby had deceived him. He pitied her from the very bottom of his heart, though at the same time he could not divest himself of the fear that she would not be so punctual in returning what she had borrowed of him, as he at first had been given to expect; which, should it be the case, what was to become of his note?—Though Faulkland, he was conscious, would not part with it, or even present it to him, in case he waited not upon him at the specified period, yet such apparent neglect must lower him greatly in his opinion; to avoid which he determined, should Mrs. Sourby disappoint him, to acquaint Faulkland with every particular, concealing only the lady's name, and he was certain he would excuse him, return him his note, and wait for payment until it quite suited his convenience.

At

At a late hour Henry returned home. He obtained a glimpse of Mrs. Sourby ere he left the room, and read in her countenance that she still continued unsuccessful. She was too anxious at the game to notice him, as indeed was the greater part of the company; they seemed eager to increase what they had already obtained, or by a fortunate stroke of chance, to recover their losses; very few seemed inclined to follow his example of retiring, though they had encroached then nearly two hours on the Sunday morning.

It was something better than a week after this that Radmill expressed a wish to visit Margate, to which Henry objected, not being willing to leave London for reasons before mentioned;—however, his objection, and his refusing to acquaint his father with the motive that had produced it, made no other alteration in the old gentleman's determination than visiting Brighton instead of the place his fancy had at first suggested.

Henry, finding him so peremptory, conceived it most prudent to comply with his wishes. He, however, immediately waited upon Faulkland, and acquainted him of the necessity he was under of accompanying his father into the country, and hinted to him that he was dubious whether he should return ere his note became due. He positively insisted upon Henry's taking back the note; and, by way of reconciling Henry to such a procedure, desired him to give him a note on demand in lieu of it, and concluded with observing, that whenever he felt himself necessitated for the money, he should not fail of applying to him.

Henry, who saw the good intention of his friend, at last complied, and they soon after parted, well satisfied with each other.

Henry, as soon as he left Faulkland, waited upon Mrs. Sourby, and informed her of the journey he was about to make,
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and that probably he should not have the pleasure of seeing her again for two or three months. She seemed evidently pleased, though surprised at this unexpected intelligence, but never once mentioned the money she had borrowed of him, or in what manner she was to return it; and he soon after left her, by no means satisfied with her conduct.

Had Henry, on the onset, made this affair known to his father, there was no doubt but he would have advanced the money for him; but then he had promised Mrs. Sourby to keep it a profound secret, and he knew his father too well to imagine he would part with a guinea beyond his usual allowance, which was one hundred pounds quarterly, without being first apprized of the use he intended to make of it: and besides, latterly he had been rather extravagant, and had obtained a few hundreds of him to discharge some debts that he had imprudently contracted, and was now

become extremely cautious not again to merit his reproaches, by encroaching upon his bounty beyond what he himself conceived requisite to bestow.

Henry had hardly been in Brighton a week, when he received a letter from a Mr. Sackworth, a person totally unknown to him, which informed him that Mr. Faulkland, a few days before, had been killed by a fall from his horse, and that his note for one thousand pounds, on demand, had been found among the effects of the deceased, and which he requested he would immediately honour with payment.

Henry's agitation, as may be remembered, in perusing this letter, excited Radmill's curiosity and alarm; and, notwithstanding all he could urge, Henry refused to inform him of its contents. He the same day transmitted a letter to Mrs. Sourby, explaining the method he had adopted to procure the money she had received from him;

him ; and, as the time was now expired for which she had solicited it, hoped she would not fail to wait upon Mr. Sackworth, at the house of his deceased friend, and take up the note for him.

Several days elapsed, and Henry conceived, as he had not heard from Mrs. Sourby or Mr. Sackworth again, that Mrs. Sourby had found the means to comply with his request ; and though he was much grieved at the accident which had deprived his friend Faulkland of life, he became quite satisfied that he should hear nothing more respecting his note.

CHAP. X.*The disagreeable Surprise.*

SO confident was Henry that Mrs. Sourby had waited upon Mr. Sackworth, as he had requested, that his thoughts never once reverted to the subject, until the day succeeding the evening on which Mary-Jane had so strangely disappeared. The letter which he received, and which his father, who was with him at the time, and buoyed himself with the hope that it must be from Mary-Jane, was a second letter from Mr. Sackworth, in which he expressed much surprise that Henry had not condescended to honour his first epistle with

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an answer; and likewise assured him that if he heard not from him by the return of the post, he should adopt such measures to enforce payment of his note as the law in such cases allowed.

The reader is already acquainted how greatly Henry was hurt and concerned on the receipt of this; more particularly so when he discovered by the date of it that it ought to have been delivered to him at least four days before.

The distress in which Henry beheld his father when he informed him that the letter brought no intelligence of Mary-Jane, and his increasing agonies when he refused to acquaint him from whom it came, had nearly overcome Henry's resolution of keeping him ignorant of its contents, until the promise he had made to Mrs. Sourby, which as yet he could not imagine himself absolved from, recurred to his memory, and for this time prevented him from divulging

the affair to his father. Had he been certain that Mrs. Sourby had really deceived him, he would not have hesitated to make the affair known to him, and crave his advice and assistance; but whether she had, or had not deceived him, at present it was impossible he should know. The letter he had written to her might have miscarried, or a number of unforeseen events might have prevented her receiving it; should either of which be the case, he should conceive himself most essentially to blame, and deserving of her loudest censure in betraying what he had promised not to divulge.

Northcote made them a visit soon after with Plagiary, Sir Watkin Beverly, and Eliza, when Northcote hinting his suspicion that Mary-Jane had gone off with Barville, induced Henry and Plagiary to enquire at his lodgings if he had left Brighton on the preceding evening, as was reported, and found their fears in that particular verified; and that two of his servants, who were
much

much surprised at their master's sudden departure, as several days yet remained ere the time for which the house had been taken would expire, received orders, late the night before, to pack up every thing that belonged to him, and to take places for themselves in the coach for London, on the following morning, which orders they had obeyed.

Plagiary and Henry were now half convinced that what Northcote had uttered was but too true, though, like him, they suspected not that she had gone voluntarily with him, but that he had by some means or other trepanned her away. How to proceed they knew not; to discover what road they had taken was their first object; yet, upon second consideration, this could be but of little avail, for if they had set off for London, there they must have arrived some hours before;—at all events, a journey to Barville's town house seemed to Henry the most likely means he could pursue to
after-

ascertain whether or not Barville merited their suspicions. This he mentioned to Plagiary, who gave his opinion in the affirmative. They soon after separated, and Henry was hastening to inform his father of what he had learned, and to request his permission to leave Brighton in search of them immediately, when a gentleman, addressing him by his name, begged to speak a few words to him. Henry stopped, and the other acquainted him that he had a writ against him, at the suit of Mr. Sackworth, executor to the late Mr. Faulkland, for one thousand pounds.

Henry, overcome with surprise, could not articulate a word ;—the other, perceiving his embarrassment, desired he would walk with him to the Castle Tavern, where they could discourse upon the subject uninterrupted.

Henry followed him in silence ;—they soon reached the inn ; when Henry began to reflect upon what means he could devise to
extricate

extricate himself from his present difficulty. No other method offered itself but to acquaint his father with the affair; but this his promise to Mrs. Sourby prohibited, and he held a promise too sacred to be broken through any inconvenience that might attach to himself in keeping it. But his father—if the matter were not speedily settled, how would he support his absence? Almost distracted with the contending emotions, honour and duty, he knew not how to decide. He made the bailiff acquainted with as much of the transaction that had occasioned his present distress as he could with propriety, without betraying Mrs. Sourby, and requested his advice.

The bailiff, who possessed none of those nice scruples of honour which influenced the conduct of Henry, advised him by all means to make the matter known to his father.—“Necessity,” said he, “has no law; therefore, notwithstanding your promise, it being a proceeding of absolute necessity,

necessity, you will be justified in the eyes of the world."

Henry, however, felt himself but little inclined to follow this sage advice, which the other perceiving, enquired if he had any friend in Brighton that he imagined would advance the money for him, as, unless he satisfied his demand, or procured bail, they must set off for London together as expeditiously as possible.

His mentioning London, and likewise soon after observing he had left it late on the preceding day, and that he did not reach Brighton in consequence until past midnight, occasioned Henry's thoughts again to revert to Mary-Jane. He interrogated the bailiff as to whom he had met on the road, apprizing him that a young lady of his acquaintance had the last night eloped from her friends, and it was suspected had taken the road to London.

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He replied he had seen no travellers on the road, of whom he had the remotest idea to be the person in question: "Unless," he continued, "they were within the carriage which stopped at Cuckfield to change horses just as I arrived there, about eleven o'clock in the evening:—who were within it I know not, for, without alighting, as soon as the horses were procured, they recommenced their journey."

Henry had not a doubt but the carriage contained Barville and Mary-Jane; therefore determined to pursue them, and trusting he should soon be enabled to settle his business with Sackworth on his arrival in London, he told the bailiff he was ready to accompany him, who immediately retired to give orders for a post-chaise, while Henry wrote the note, the reader is already acquainted with, to his father. He gave particular orders to the waiter, to whom he delivered it, to convey it to Mr. Radmill, on the Marine Parade, as soon as he was gone,
which

which the waiter promised faithfully to do. Henry now felt his mind much easier; for, as he had informed his father that his absence was chiefly occasioned by his endeavours to restore Mary-Jane to him, he flattered himself it would in a great measure reconcile him to the separation. The chaise was now announced, and they were presently out of sight of Brighton.

Plagiary, who obtained a glimpse of Henry ere he had quite reached the extremity of the town, concluded that, with the consent of his father, he was in pursuit of Mary-Jane and Barville; nor, until he saw Radmill in the evening, was he informed to the contrary.

The waiter, to whom Henry gave the note for his father, thoughtlessly put it into his pocket; and not until many hours afterwards, when he by chance put his hand upon it, did it again recur to his memory: when, sensible of his neglect, he hastened with it
to

to the Marine Parade, trusting the delay would prove of so little consequence, that his inattention would remain undiscovered.

At the different stages Henry made enquiries after the objects ever uppermost in his mind, but could learn nothing decisive until he entered the inn at Crawley. Here the neat little bar-maid, without much persuasion, related to him the adventures of the preceding night, and at Henry's request described the person and dress of the young lady who had been stopped in her flight to Gretna-Green by the well-timed pursuit of her father, (for such she still supposed Barville to be); who, after what he had said to her, together with the handsome present he had made her, had so gained her esteem, that the idea he might have deceived her, or was acting the part of a scoundrel, never once entered her imagination.

Henry was now certain, from the description

tion she gave of her, that it was Mary-Jane; and that she had been forced away through the deep-laid artifices of villany, was now evident likewise.

Henry, eager for an opportunity of punishing Barville for his treachery, and releasing Mary-Jane from his lawless power, became impatient to recommence his journey, which was instantly acceded to by the bailiff, and they soon after were set down, at Henry's request, at Osborne's Hotel, in the Adelphi. A waiter was immediately dispatched to Mr. Sackworth's, to desire that gentleman would wait upon them as soon as convenient. The waiter soon after returned with the disagreeable intelligence that he had left town but a few hours before, and that he was not expected home until late on the following day.

This was a severe disappointment to Henry; however, as his last resource to obtain his liberty that evening, he sent a
note

note to Mrs. Sourby, in which he informed her how disagreeably he was situated on her account, and begged to see her immediately at the hotel, as he was not allowed the privilege of sparing her that trouble by waiting upon her at her own house.

Henry soon after received the following note:—

“ Mrs. Sourby is extremely grieved that it is not in her power to comply with Mr. Radmill’s request; she is truly sorry for the inconvenience he has, and is likely to suffer on her account, but she trusts he will not impute the failure of her promise to any thing but her being disappointed in a similar way, which she could neither foresee nor avoid.”

From the diction of this epistle it was

now obvious to Henry that she never intended to repay what she had obtained from him; and his being in possession of nothing to prove his having lent her such a sum, he much doubted, should she deny having received it, which he now believed her capable of doing, if it could ever be recovered: even in the note she had sent him, she appeared to have been extremely cautious not to mention any thing that could positively be construed into an acknowledgment of the debt. With the most sovereign contempt for the object who had penned it, he refolded and put it into his pocket. Patience was now his only remedy; and the bailiff perceiving him not inclined to endeavour to procure bail, adjourned with him to his own dwelling, where Henry determined to proceed no further in the affair until he had seen Mr. Sackworth.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.*The narrow Escape.*

UNFORTUNATELY for Henry, who was rendered truly miserable that his search after his dear Mary-Jane was thus cruelly impeded, Mr. Sackworth returned not to town until the second day after his confinement at the bailiff's, when, accompanied by a Mr. Goodwin, an intimate acquaintance of Henry's, he made him a visit.

Goodwin, as soon as he saw Henry, with a loud laugh, exclaimed—"Why, how the devil, Henry, came you to suffer yourself to be caged up in this place? The sober, the
H 2 prudent,

prudent, the discreet Henry Radmill in
durance vile! Had you been such a rattling,
extravagant spendthrift as myself, I should
not have been half so much astonished at it;
but for you—how the devil happened this,
Henry?”

“Mr. Sackworth,” coolly said Henry, “I
believe can give you the best information.”

Mr. Sackworth replied—“Mr. Radmill,
I have to apologize for the coercive mea-
sures I have adopted; but in excuse of what
I have done, I will only mention that until
last night I was unacquainted with the cha-
racter of Mr. Radmill, or the esteem he
was held in by my deceased friend. To
this gentleman, Mr. Goodwin, I am in-
debted for that knowledge; and, as some
compensation for the trouble I have occa-
sioned you, I have to assure you that you
are at liberty, and that the note, which
was the ultimate cause of the degradation
you have experienced, notwithstanding Mr.
Goodwin

Goodwin has offered to advance the money for you, I shall retain until it quite suits you, Sir, to demand it of me *in propria persona*."

Henry was much astonished at this generous proof of friendship in Goodwin; he thanked him in the warmest terms for his proffered kindness, which he told him he should have felt himself inclined to accept but for the liberality of Mr. Sackworth, with whom he was not less pleased or backward in his acknowledgments for his polite behaviour and disinterested conduct; and feeling himself now quite absolved from the promise of secrecy he had made to Mrs. Sourby, he gave them the whole history of his present embarrassment, but in delicacy to that lady's character, though so little deserving, he concealed from them only her name. He should likewise, he informed them, disclose the affair to his father when next he saw him, when Mr. Sackworth might depend upon receiving his demand.

“ Now every thing is settled to the satisfaction of all parties,” exclaimed Goodwin, “ we must crack a bottle together ere we part.”

This was no sooner proposed than agreed to, and was presently procured for them by Henry's recent acquaintance, the bailiff; and during the short time they were over it, Mr. Sackworth and Henry, who seemed mutually pleased with each other, shook hands, and trusted time would make them better acquainted.

Henry, as they were about to depart, desired his new companion to acquaint him with the expence he had incurred during his sojourn with him.

Mr. Sackworth, he replied, had settled his demand.

This Henry insisted upon returning. The other absolutely refused to accept it, observing,

observing, if he wished they should continue friends, he must humour him in this point, and utter not another word upon the subject.

Henry, finding it in vain to contend with him, was at last obliged, though reluctantly, to submit, and they separated; and Henry, the moment he was at liberty, hastened to the house of Mr. Barville, in Pall Mall, where, on his enquiring for him, the servant informed him that he had left London the night before.

“ To what place is he gone?” replied Henry.

“ I cannot tell,” answered the servant.

“ When do you expect he will return?”

“ It is uncertain.”

“ I wish to see him on particular business.”

“ He is not in London, or I would seek for him.”

"Nor have you an idea when he will return?"

"Certainly not; he seldom informs his servants of what is rarely known even by himself."

"Had he any lady with him when he left town last night?"

"You are more inquisitive than it behoves me to answer. I would advise you, Sir, to reserve those questions for my master; he will reply to them more correctly than I am enabled to do."

Henry took his purse from his pocket, and exclaimed, as he held it towards him—

"Be explicit, and answer me truly such questions as I may put to you, and this shall be your reward!"

The man's countenance betrayed his inclination to comply with his request, when a second servant, possibly wondering at the long stay of the first, now made his appearance. The other, on perceiving him, whispered

pered Henry to be with him on the following night precisely at eight o'clock, when he should be more at liberty to speak with him. Then shutting the door hastily, he exclaimed—"A damned inquisitive fellow! I wonder who the devil he is?" which Henry knew was uttered solely to deceive those who were within, and might be curious to learn what had detained him so long at the door.

Henry was punctual to the appointment on the following evening, and had scarcely reached the house when he discovered the servant, who had been some time expecting him. The man, on observing him, advanced towards him, and told him he was ready to satisfy him to the utmost of his ability in any intelligence he could give him respecting his master, if he were equally ready to part with what he had proffered on the preceding night.

Henry immediately adjourned with him

to a neighbouring coffee-house, gave him what he seemed so anxious to obtain—his purse; and learned, in return, that Barville, with a young lady, had arrived from Brighton two nights before, and that the lady, he believed, from what he had since heard whispered in the house, had been forced away from her friends; that she appeared in the greatest distress, which, however, was little regarded by his master, who was determined not to part with her; and, he supposed, fearful of being detected by the lady's friends, he was last night induced to remove her to some other place, but to where he was unacquainted, unless it was to Barville Castle, in South Wales. He concluded with exhorting Henry not to disclose to any one what he had related to him;—"For," said he, "should you be so ungenerous, I know not what the consequence may be; I should expect at least to lose my life, for I am sure my master, or Rowland, who is all in all with him, would blow my brains out."

Henry,

Henry, having assured him he had nothing to fear in that respect, made himself acquainted with a few particulars relative to Barville Castle and its situation, which the other was well enabled to give him, as he had been there more than once with his master, and that too when he had made it subservient to his libidinous pursuits.

Henry soon after left him, and regained Osborne's Hotel, where he had taken apartments, and sat down to write an account to his father of the intelligence he had gained of Barville and Mary-Jane, and of his determination to follow them into Wales on the succeeding morning.

It was Henry's first design, when he left Barville's servant on the preceding evening, with an intention of seeing him again at the time he had appointed on the following night, in the intermediate space to wait upon Mrs. Sourby, reproach her for her unprincipled conduct, and peremptorily

insist upon her returning him the sum she had borrowed; when the conversation he had heard at Mrs. Squander's recurred to his memory, and imagining that her imprudence, and bad success at the gaming-table, might have effectually deprived her of the means of being just to him, excited that degree of pity for her unhappy situation, should such really be the case, as induced him at that time to relinquish all ideas of revenge.

Henry, some hours ere morn, began his journey on horseback towards Barville Castle. At a small inn, which was only ten miles from the spot he sought, he determined to leave his horse, and the next day, the distance being so trifling, he conceived it most prudent to proceed on foot to reconnoitre the Castle.

“Should I be fortunate enough,” thought Henry, as the black turrets of the Castle met his sight, “to discover Mary-Jane
in

in yon gloomy edifice, I am well aware it will require the nicest circumspection to effect her release; for the villain who, to gratify his wicked propensities, scruples not to hold at defiance all laws, human and divine, conscious that his powers, in this rude place, by far exceed mine, would laugh at my menaces should I openly accuse him of his atrocities, and threaten to inflict that chastisement his diabolical conduct so justly entitles him to. Incensed by my temerity, and aided by his deluded minions, whom his gold has made participaters of his guilt, he might secure me, and prevent the good I meditate in the emancipation of my poor Mary-Jane."

Henry, therefore, studious to avoid being discovered, at length reached the ruinous pile, and entered, through a large gap in the wall, into the deserted part of it, where he continued for some time ere he could assure himself the other extremity was inhabited.

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This, however, was at last made known to him by a sight of Barville and his honest agent, Rowland, who, in deep discourse, proceeded from an opposite angle. They advanced towards him. Henry concealed himself behind the fragments of the tottering edifice; and they soon arrived near enough to enable him to hear part of their conversation.

“She must, by some means or other, have contrived to explore the parts where lies the object of all our fears,” said Barville, visibly agitated.

“Impossible!” replied Rowland; “Mabel has assured me she has never quitted the apartment in which she is confined.—Can we not account for what we have seen, in any other way?”

“I can think of none; at any rate, as she is so totally in my power, from her we can have but little to fear.—She shall never be torn from me alive I am determined.”

“The

“ The safest method would be to dispatch her at once.”

“ Not so hasty; I love her—must possess her; and could I but seduce her, I think it would effectually secure her true to our interest.”

“ But you say she treats your offers with contempt?”

“ True; but force shall shortly obtain what to my entreaties she has hitherto denied; and then, should she continue——”

They were too far off by this time for Henry to hear the conclusion of the sentence. A cold dew overspread his brow as he reflected upon what he had heard; he shuddered with predictive dread: though part of their discourse he understood not, yet the other he was conscious alluded to Mary-Jane. If he had understood rightly, Barville had been advised to murder her;—to murder whom? The object of his earliest, his tenderest affection, the idol of his soul, his Mary-Jane! without whom, since their separation,

separation, he found, should she not again be restored to him, he should be miserable. His blood boiled with honest indignation as he followed the miscreants with his eyes, until a projecting part of the fabric hid them from his sight; when, rendered incautious by the increasing ebullition of passion, and a desire to obtain a speedy and complete revenge, he drew his pistols from his pocket, and was on the point of rushing from his retreat to sacrifice both to his just resentment, when the idea that he might be mistaken, and Mary-Jane not the person against whom the words of horrid import had been uttered, providentially intervened, and deterred him from his rash design.

Rendered more cool and collected by reflection, he continued on the spot until he saw Barville and Rowland return to the Castle. He then began to examine the dreary apartments, with an intention, if possible, to find some pass that might conduct
him

him into the habitable part of the building; but fruitless was the attempt—all communication seemed entirely cut off;—he, however, gave not over his search until the night was far advanced, when he returned to the inn to obtain some refreshment, which the cravings of nature, too potent to be resisted, having fasted the whole day, rendered absolutely necessary.

He, however, ~~without~~ retiring to rest, though much fatigued, having finished his frugal repast, returned to the ruin, determined to watch narrowly for an opportunity of learning what passed within its gloomy walls.

For several days and nights was Henry thus occupied, without being able to solve his doubts, whether Mary-Jane was, or was not there confined; when one night, rendered desperate by his bad success, he determined to seek Barville, and declare the purpose of his visit. Having formed this resolution,

resolution, he was about to put it into instant execution, when suddenly the sound of footsteps echoed through the interstices of the edifice, and retarded his design. He listened attentively; the sounds became more distinct; he endeavoured to discover from whence they proceeded, but the attempt was fruitless. Some one screamed violently; again he hurried he knew not where, when, by the rays of the moon penetrating through the apertures of the building, he discovered an opening, but the object he could not perceive that had caused his anxiety and alarm. He loudly pronounced the name of Mary-Jane; no one answered, and all again was hushed in solemn silence.

He continued musing where next he should guide his footsteps, until loud and repeated shrieks again propelled him to proceed whithersoever chance might direct him. Suddenly a ray of light gleamed through an opening on his left; he rushed into
the

the apartment to which it led, and beheld Barville about to plunge a suspended dagger into the bosom of the trembling Mary-Jane ! His timely interposition preserved her life. Barville, overcome by fear and surprise, released her from his grasp, when Mary-Jane sprang from him, unconscious to whom she was thus indebted for her preservation.

Barville, whose rolling eyeballs and pallid cheeks evinced the intense dread Henry's words had inspired, now gazed fearfully around ; he started as he beheld him, but quickly regaining his scattered spirits, and believing him to be unarmed, brandishing his dagger, he advanced towards him. Henry levelled his pistol ; the miscreant drew back appalled ; suddenly he extinguished the light. Henry at the same moment discharged the pistol, but unfortunately missed his object ; he, however, rushed forward, and endeavoured to secure him, but the other, well-acquainted with every intricate passage, soon made his escape.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

The Retreat, and the lucky Rencontre.

HENRY, finding it impossible to overtake and secure Barville, now used his utmost efforts to discover to what place Mary-Jane had fled, but in this he proved equally unsuccessful;—in vain did he echo her name through every avenue of the solemn structure; no answer was returned, not a response, save what himself created, met his attentive ear.

For some hours had he continued a fruitless search, when again the sound of footsteps resounded from a winding passage,
which

which a glimmering light, that was suddenly emitted from it, rendered visible; he advanced towards it, and discovered Barville and Rowland, both well-armed, examining cautiously every part that they passed, apparently with the design to discover and sacrifice him to their fury.

Prudence now advised Henry to make a precipitate retreat; but then what was to become of Mary-Jane? To know her to be surrounded by danger, and to abandon her to her fate, was terrible; yet he knew not where she had secreted herself, and should he overcome the dæmons, whose haggard and determined looks evinced to him that they were bent upon his destruction, it would not discover to him the place of her concealment. However, he determined not to leave her. He again seized a pistol, and was awaiting their approach, when an idea presented itself that by hastening back to the inn, he could persuade some of the domestics to return to the castle with

with him, when he should not only be enabled to seize upon Barville and his accomplice, but their united efforts must soon discover the retreat of his Mary-Jane.

This induced him to make his escape, which he soon effected, and with all possible expedition reached the inn. The rosy tints of morn were just appearing in the east; several of the household were already arisen, and about to pursue their diurnal occupations, as Henry, faint and weary, entered. Three of them he soon engaged to accompany him, having related to them as much of the villany of Barville as he conceived requisite to answer his purpose, and promised liberally to reward them for their trouble.

They soon arrived at the Castle, when Henry advanced to the entrance, from which, on his first visit, he had seen Barville and Rowland proceed. The door was secured; he loudly applied the knocker, determined

if

if no one answered to the summons, to demolish the door;—however, he had not waited long ere old Martha appeared, when Henry learned, to his extreme mortification, that Barville, with the family, herself and her husband excepted, had left the Castle about half an hour before.

Henry, however, as Martha might be endeavouring to impose upon him with a fabricated tale, obliged her to conduct them into every apartment in the Castle, which having done, he was satisfied that she had informed him of the truth. In vain he interrogated her respecting Mary-Jane; all the intelligence she was able to give him of her was, that her master had arrived at the Castle nearly a fortnight before, and with him a lady and her maid: the former she had never seen but on the day of her arrival, being always confined to her room; and she supposed they were all gone away, as they had come, together.

Henry,

Henry, from the artless manner in which this account was delivered, was convinced that she had no intention to deceive him; he doubted not but Barville had again seized upon his poor, unfortunate Mary-Jane, and was conveying her to some other remote place, most probably anticipating the consequences, should he remain where he was, as he had not been able to prevent the escape of him by whom he had been so dreadfully alarmed, and saved from the crime he meditated.

Henry, with his followers, now returned to the inn, where having rewarded them for their trouble, he ordered his horse, with an intention to discover what road Barville had taken, and to pursue him; but the fatigue he had experienced for several nights, having not been in bed, but passed them solely in the damp, cheerless, and decayed apartments of Barville Castle, together with the violence of his feelings, which hurried him almost to despair when he found all his efforts

efforts terminated in disappointment, rendered him so weak and languid that he had not strength to execute his design.

The master of the inn, perceiving how extremely he was disordered, persuaded him to defer his intention, and to take a few hours' rest, which he doubted not would much refresh him; and Henry, who found himself so faint and weak that he apprehended in his present state he should be unable to set his horse, at last agreed to adopt his advice.

He had been in bed but a short time, when he was seized with a cold shivering. He continued extremely ill the whole of the day, and the next morning was so much worse, that medical advice was deemed absolutely necessary. In short, a violent fever succeeded, and for many weeks Henry was confined to his bed. At length the strength of his constitution triumphed over his malady, and the surgeon pronounced

him to be in a state of convalescence. Some weeks more elapsed ere his health was sufficiently established to enable him to retrace his road to London, which, however, he at last accomplished, though wretched in the extreme that he had as yet obtained no intelligence of Mary-Jane.

On his arrival at Osborne's Hotel, he found several letters from his father, as he had given orders ere he left London, not expecting he should be absent so long, that they should be kept until his return. One of them he perceived by the post-mark had only arrived that morning; this he with trepidation first opened, which confirmed his fears that his father was still ignorant of the fate of Mary-Jane; and it likewise acquainted him how wretched he had made him, in not addressing him one letter since that in which he announced himself on the point of travelling into Wales.

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Henry, during his confinement, had frequently, when his strength would permit, written to his father, and continued to give him hopes that he should yet recover their Mary-Jane; but never once mentioned his own illness, well knowing how greatly he should increase his anxiety and distress, were he to mention it: therefore he was much astonished, by the pathetic epistle he had perused, to learn that those letters he had never received. However, on reading those which had preceded it, the mystery was soon unravelled; for until then he knew not that his father had removed from Brighton, to which place he had directed his letters, though he knew it was his first intention of returning to town in October, but which intention he thought he must have been induced to forego, in consequence of the absence of Mary-Jane: therefore he had not the remotest idea that he would remove until he joined him, or Mary-Jane was restored to him.

Another letter apprized him of the visit that had been made by Northcote and himself to Sir Benjamin Barville, in Somersetshire; what had incited them to the journey, and what had afterwards occasioned them, with Sir Benjamin, to stay at Rook-dale Abbey, at which place they still were; but that they should, ere then, have returned to London, had they not been prevented by the bad state of Sir Benjamin's health, which totally incapacitated him from undertaking the journey.

Barville Castle, it likewise informed him, he had visited; but found it deserted, except by an old woman, who, with her husband, whom he saw not, were left to take care of it: consequently the explanation he so much wished to take place between Sir Benjamin and his son, was for that time prevented, and no satisfactory intelligence of Mary-Jane to be obtained.

Henry was extremely grieved to find
that

that he had been for such a length of time confined with sickness in an inn in Wales, and his father within a few miles of the spot without his knowing it. He immediately wrote a letter to him, in which he informed him of every thing that had happened since they last parted, assured him that he was then quite recovered from his illness, and that he should continue in London but to put the law in force against Barville, to oblige him to confess how he had disposed of Mary Jane, when he would join him at Rook-dale Abbey.

Henry, having sent his letter, and taken some refreshment, left the hotel to call at Barville's house, to learn if he was, or had been in town since he saw him. In his road he met Plagiary, who, after expressing his pleasure and surprise at so unexpectedly meeting with him, enquired if he had met Mary-Jane; and before he had time to reply, he rejoined that he had seen her, and was in quest of her. Henry was too

astonished at what he heard immediately to reply, when Plagiary related to him his having beheld her at Mrs. Sourby's door, (for he it was that had excited her terror, as she had mistaken him for Barville);—that at first he knew her not, but believed her to be one of those compliant females whom every person might presume to address without the danger of offending, from seeing her alone and unprotected in the streets at such an hour. He then mentioned her alarm and subsequent flight; and notwithstanding he had pursued her, that she had escaped him, nor could he tell which road she had taken.

Henry, a little recovered from his surprise, could scarcely credit what he heard; but the other repeating what he had said, and persisting, in so positive a manner, that he could not have been mistaken, he no longer doubted him; when, half wild with joy, and fear lest she should elude them both, he traversed every street through
which

which Plagiary thought there was a probability of her having proceeded, and at last, supported by the Peace-officers, more dead than alive, but a few paces from Mrs. Shipley's, they beheld her. Mary-Jane at the same time, as the lights the officers held made surrounding objects visible, beheld Henry;—he rushed towards her; she shrieked, and fell lifeless into his arms.

The men at first were apprehensive of a rescue, and were preparing to make a vigorous defence, until one of them, who knew Henry, and perceiving the situation to which Mary-Jane was reduced, prevailed upon the others to reconduct her to Mrs. Shipley's.

To Mrs. Shipley's was she again conveyed, where Henry soon learned of that good woman what had so recently passed, and by the officers that the warrant had been issued to apprehend her by a Mr. Nugent, in consequence of his son having

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been

been missing some months; and that the ring the lady had given to the coachman, when unable to pay his demand, he would make oath his son had upon his finger when last he saw him.

“ Mary-Jane suspected of having committed a murder!” exclaimed Henry; “ preposterous! My poor girl, when will her persecutions be at an end?—How fortunate it was I met her!—Inhuman men, could not the first sight of her angelic countenance, where, by the hand of Providence, innocence is so legibly depicted, convince you of your error, convince you how erroneous were your suspicions?”

“ How came the ring in her possession?” exclaimed one of the officers. “ Answer me that, and I shall be satisfied she is guiltless.”

“ No doubt,” said Henry, “ but she will well account for it.”

He now redoubled his attention towards
her,

her, which, in conjunction with Mrs. Shipley's, quickly revived her, when again her eyes rested upon Henry, and again she sunk into his arms in transports unutterable.

Henry, on her becoming sufficiently composed, which his presence greatly accelerated, adverted to the ring, when she related to them minutely the manner in which she had obtained it.

They shuddered as they listened to the horrid tale, and not one of them but was thoroughly satisfied of the truth of what she had uttered. When she had finished, one of them, addressing himself to Henry, told him, that notwithstanding they were so well satisfied of her being innocent, they must still detain her as their prisoner; but advised that immediate application should be made to Mr. Nugent, as by his means her liberty might be soon procured.

To this measure Henry consented; a

hackney-coach was instantly called, in which he, with Mary-Jane and two of the officers, were shortly after conveyed to Mr. Nugent's. Plagiary declined accompanying them, judging he could be no longer serviceable, and that Mary-Jane with Henry, was sufficiently protected.

To inform the reader of the cause of Mary-Jane's apprehension, as before described, we have only to observe that the coachman, as soon as she had given him the ring, took it to a pawnbroker, determined to get only his fare, two shillings and six-pence, upon it; and in case the person from whom he had it should demand it of him again, to give her the duplicate, as the interest of the pledge he conceived she had an undoubted right to discharge.

The pawnbroker to whom he took it, had sold the ring to Mr. Nugent, about two years before, for thirty-five guineas; he knew it again immediately, and judging
by

by the trifle he would have taken on it, that he came not honestly by it, had him taken into custody, and sent for Mr. Nugent, who confirmed his suspicions, when proper means were taken to secure the person from whom he had received it.

The coachman, with the officers who were sent in quest of Mary-Jane, gained sight of her as she hastened from Mrs. Sourby's door, and followed her to Mrs. Shipley's; they waited there for some time, expecting her to come out again, but finding she did not, they entered, as before related.

CHAP. XIII.

The happy Meeting.

ON their arrival at Mr. Nugent's, they were presently conducted into the parlour, where, with two other gentlemen, Mr. Nugent was seated, who arose as they entered, and Mr. Nugent discovered great surprise when one of the officers informed him that Mary-Jane was the person against whom the warrant had been issued. Henry led her to a chair, when, at his request, she recapitulated what had occurred to her at Barville Castle, by which the ring had come into her possession.

Mr.

Mr. Nugent listened attentively until she had concluded her narration, when he expressed his regret at the vexation that, by his means, she had been subject to; and though greatly agitated, he rejoined—“Barville, the inhuman Barville, I am afraid, has murdered my poor boy; and Providence, no doubt, rendered you the instrument to bring this dark affair to light, that the culprit may be brought to justice!—Inhuman, sanguinary monster!—Oh my poor boy!”

One of the gentlemen who was with Mr. Nugent when Mary-Jane and Henry arrived, now enquired if the person alluded to was the son of Sir Benjamin Barville, of Somersetshire?

Henry answered him in the affirmative. He seemed more grieved than surprised at this information; then exclaimed—“I knew his brother well, Lieutenant Barville; and have often made enquiries, but could
never

never learn the fate of that good young man; he was my most intimate friend."

"I believe I can inform you," said Henry; "he was lost in his passage to the West-Indies, about twenty years ago."

"So many imagine," he replied, "but I know to the contrary. It was his intention to embark with his regiment for the West-Indies, who, about the time you mentioned, were all lost in their passage; but his wife, the daughter of a Mrs. Smith, whom he married but a few months before, was suddenly taken ill, and being at the same time far advanced in her pregnancy, it induced him to part with his commission, as she was by no means in a situation, but at the extreme hazard of her life, to make such a voyage. His father was so enraged, in consequence of his marrying a woman with no fortune, that he never could be prevailed upon to see him afterwards. Poor Barville, fearful that his continuance in England might incense him still more, and totally prevent a recon-

a reconciliation, to conceal it from his knowledge, assumed the name of Romley. Neither his brother, whom he considered as his best friend, nor any of his relatives, ever knew but that he shared in the same unhappy fate as the regiment to which he formerly belonged. I never saw him after this, though I received a letter, in which he acquainted me with the particulars of what I have now related, just as I was on the point of making a voyage to the East-Indies, and which I answered but a few hours ere I quitted England."

Henry was rivetted to his chair with wonder and amazement. Mary-Jane was so much overcome that, but for the timely assistance of Mr. Nugent, who rung the bell, and ordered the servant to give her a glass of water, she would have fainted. Henry, on perceiving her a little revived, advanced to the gentleman that had occasioned these painful emotions, and exclaimed — "Your

—"Your name, I presume, Sir, is Stampford?"

"Stampford," he replied, "is my name."

"Merciful Providence!" tremulously ejaculated Mary-Jane, "then must the hardened wretch, the author of our sufferings, be my uncle!"

The other gentleman, who fortunately was the magistrate that had issued the warrant to apprehend Mary-Jane, finding the conversation grow extremely interesting, desired the Peace-officers to withdraw, telling them he was perfectly satisfied with what they had done, and that at present he had no further occasion for them.

They immediately retired; when Henry advised Mary-Jane for a short time to withdraw into the next room, fearing what he was about to make known to Mr. Stampford might too much affect her. Mr. Nugent again rung the bell, and desired

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Mrs. Powel, his housekeeper, might be sent to him, by whom Mary-Jane was led into the adjoining apartment, when Henry gave Mr. Stampford a full detail of every thing relative to Mary-Jane, and likewise what he had learned by his father's letters, respecting his visit, with Northcote, to Sir Benjamin Barville, and of their subsequent journey into Wales, where, with Sir Benjamin, they still remained.

Stampford was affected even to tears as he heard of the melancholy end of his friend and his amiable consort. Poor Nugent was too much distressed, as his thoughts reverted to his son, to pay much attention to their discourse; while Mr. Lumley, the magistrate, was transfixed to his seat with horror and surprise;—his countenance flushed with honest indignation against the diabolical wretch, the author of their misery, whose villany he could trace through every scene, and felt that the death
of

of Nugent was not the only murder he had to answer for.

Stampford's voyage to the East-Indies had been occasioned by a near relation of his having died there, and bequeathed to him the chief part of what he had possessed, which was something considerable, and which circumstances rendered it necessary he should be there in person to receive; where having arrived, he soon settled matters agreeably to his wishes, and finding he could increase his fortune much better where he was, than he could hope or expect to do in England, continued there for better than fifteen years, when, with the rich earnings of his industry, he returned to his native land, and almost the first person he waited upon was the brother of his deceased friend, Lieutenant Barville, to make enquiries respecting him; when that honest gentleman, with the utmost *sang froid*, acquainted him of his having perished in his passage to the West-Indies. He did not undeceive him; and

and learning also that his father, who was in the same error, had never been reconciled to him, he ventured not to undeceive him either. Of these particulars he now informed Henry; and that notwithstanding he had tried every effort to get intelligence of his friend, he could never learn any thing of him, and until the present moment, was totally ignorant of what had befallen him.

Henry soon after expressed a wish to begin his journey to Rook-dale Abbey, if Mary-Jane's health and spirits would admit of it, early on the following morning, when Stampford, who now felt extremely anxious to make every thing he knew respecting Lieutenant Barville known to his father, requested permission to accompany them, which was with pleasure granted by Henry, until which time Mr. Nugent begged they would continue with him. This kind offer likewise Henry gratefully accepted. Stampford, however, politely declined it, and soon after departed, first telling Henry he would
see

see him early on the next day, and be ready to attend him into Wales whenever it was convenient for him to begin the journey.

Mary-Jane now made her appearance, when Mr. Lumley took his leave, promising to return again on the following day, when he would take every necessary step for the apprehension of Barville.

In vain were Henry's endeavours to console Mr. Nugent, and detach his thoughts from the horrid catastrophe on which they seemed fixed. Mary-Jane, though Henry was beside her, fruitlessly struggled to banish her recent calamities from her mind; to learn that Barville, a murderer, was her uncle, shocked her too much, and caused such unpleasant sensations in her bosom as were not easily to be overcome.

Henry mentioned to her his intention, if she were well enough, to set off on the succeeding day for Wales, to join his father.

To

To this Mary-Jane cheerfully assented, and being apprized of Mr. Nugent's polite request, that till then they would continue with him, she was soon after shewn to her room by Mrs. Powel. Henry and Mr. Nugent followed her example; when the latter expressed a wish that he might find them both better in health and spirits in the morning, though the misery that rankled in his own breast he felt could not be so suddenly alleviated.

Mary-Jane felt so anxious once more to embrace her earliest benefactor, that as she entered the breakfast-room on the following morning, where Henry and Mr. Nugent were waiting for her, she declared herself so much refreshed by her night's rest, that their journey into Wales needed not be procrastinated a moment on her account.

Henry was overjoyed at the alteration he beheld in her; and poor Nugent, whose pallid countenance evinced him to have
passed

passed the night in anguish and unavailing regret, congratulated her on the improvement of her health.

Mr. Stampford soon after joined them, when Henry informed him of his intention of setting off for Wales as soon as possible. Stampford said he was quite ready to accompany him, and proposed, which was gladly accepted, that his carriage, with post-horses after the first stage, might convey them, it being more commodious and pleasant than a post-chaise, which Henry was about to request Mr. Nugent would order his servant to procure for him.

Matters being thus settled, in about an hour the carriage drove to the door; two servants on horseback attended it, and a third was sent forward to order relays of horses:—they then bade adieu to their disconsolate host, in whose sorrows they sincerely sympathized, and began their journey.

They

The reached Newbury the first day, where they passed the night, and on the succeeding evening entered Bristol; continued there until the next morning, when they crossed the New Passage, and about mid-day arrived at the inn Henry had left but a few days before, distant ten miles from Barville Castle, and not more than fifteen from Rook-dale Abbey.

Here Henry wrote a few lines to his father, to prepare him for their reception, that they might not surprise him too much by their unexpected appearance. This one of the servants set forward with, while they proceeded slowly after him.

At length the carriage stopped at the Abbey. Radmill and Northcote were at the door to receive them. Radmill, overcome with joyful emotions as Mary-Jane descended from the carriage, caught her in his arms.—“ Oh my child! my child!” he exclaimed, “ have I again found you, and
at

at a time so unexpected? I shall now die in peace; my grey hairs will not descend to the grave with sorrow now you are once more restored to me!"

Mary-Jane, whose tears could no longer be restrained, at last exclaimed—"Oh my more than father! my friend! my revered benefactor! how shall I repay your goodness? Your Mary-Jane is happy; all her troubles are immersed in the bliss this joyous meeting affords her!"

Northcote now claimed her attention, as did Henry, Radmill's. Northcote had reviewed her with delight; all suspicion, that she had voluntarily fled with Barville, evaporated as he fixed his eyes upon her lovely and intelligent features; a tear glistened in his eye as he welcomed her return; while Mary-Jane, now conscious that in him she beheld her grandfather, became too agitated to reply. He took her
hand,

hand, and led her in. Radmill in the interim was engaged with Henry.

“ My dear boy,” exclaimed the affectionate old man, “ what anxiety have I not endured on your account! But I am happy now,” he rejoined, as he reclined his head over his shoulder, and wept; “ thank God I am happy, for my children are again restored to me!”

“ May you long, very long continue so!” replied Henry; “ may no earthly care ever again conspire to make you otherwise!”

Henry now introduced Mr. Stampford, who, amidst the general joy, had been almost unnoticed. Radmill started as he heard the name, but forebore at that time to ask any questions, and they followed Mary-Jane and Northcote into the house.

The fervour of joy having subsided, and

heaven-born tranquillity diffused itself among them, Mary-Jane related every thing that had happened to her since her cruel separation. Horror, detestation, surprise, and joy alternately possessed her auditors; but when Stampford cleared the mystery, which proved Mary-Jane to be the child of that daughter Northcote had so long lamented, words are inadequate to describe his emotions: he trembled, gasped for breath, respiration was impeded; Mary-Jane dropped on her knees, and seized his hand, which she bathed with her tears.

“ It must be so!” he at last faintly articulated as he raised her up; “ the affection I have ever felt for thee leads me not to doubt it! I have that within which tells me I am thy grandfather! Mayst thou meet a happier lot than thy mother’s! for though good and amiable, yet could she not escape the iron fang of misery.”

Henry, on Northcote and Mary-Jane
becoming

becoming more composed, enquired for Sir Benjamin Barville, whom he had not yet seen, and was informed by his father that he was so extremely ill, that he had not quitted his bed for many days; that he had been insensible some time, and for the last twelve hours they had expected that every moment would be his last.—“ His daughter,” he continued, “ and Mrs. Mowbray, with the physician, are now with him; and a short time ere you arrived, I enquired how he was, and was answered that they believed he was dying. Heaven, in compassion, will not permit him to hear of the atrocities of his son, but will snatch him to the realms of bliss, to give him that reward his exemplary life has merited.

CHAP. XIV.

The Funeral, and the Suicide.

MARY-JANE, who had never seen Sir Benjamin Barville, buoyed herself with the hope that he was not so near his end as the physician imagined;—she felt extremely anxious for his recovery, and by him to be acknowledged as his grandchild: therefore it redoubled the shock she received, when, as she descended the stairs on the following morning, she was informed by Mrs. Mowbray that Sir Benjamin had breathed his last.

Mrs. Barville was with him when he expired;

expired; and though for some time his death had been an event hourly to be expected, yet, when it took place, and she saw her best and almost her only friend taken from her, she became nearly distracted. Mrs. Mowbray and the physician, who were present, hurried her from the melancholy apartment into her own, where for a considerable time she remained insensible to every thing that was passing around her; at last the unremitted attention of Mrs. Mowbray aroused her from the torpor of grief into which she had fallen. With the most persuasive arguments she then urged her to be composed; for her children's sake not thus to endanger her health by yielding to the unavailing despondency of woe. Her words produced a right effect; the mention of her children recalled her flitting spirits, and she strove to become resigned.

It was Radmill's intention on the preceding evening, if he found Sir Benjamin better in the morning, with Mary-Jane, Northcote,

and Henry, to seek the residence of Mrs. Melworth, and return her his thanks for her former kindness towards Mary-Jane; but this was now entirely set aside: pensive melancholy took possession of each person in the Abbey, and they agreed to pass the time by themselves until the last rites had been administered to their deceased friend.

On the seventh day from Sir Benjamin's death, the necessary arrangements having been made for his removal into Somersetshire, where he was to be interred, Mrs. Barville, Mary-Jane, Radmill, and Henry, in one coach, Northcote, Stampford, and Mrs. Mowbray, in the other, followed the hearse, until in due time they arrived at the late residence of the deceased; and on the succeeding day his remains were consigned to the silent grave, regretted and lamented by all who had known him.

The next day the will was read. The whole of what Sir Benjamin had to bequeath did

did not exceed five thousand pounds, one thousand of which he left equally to be divided among those faithful domestics who had grown grey in his service; and the remaining four equally among Mrs. Barville's children, which Mrs. Barville, however, was to enjoy until they became of age.

The title, with an estate of about three thousand pounds a-year, descended to his son, in which his residence in Somersetshire was included.

A few days after the interment of Sir Benjamin, Henry received a letter from Mr. Nugent, to whom he had previously written, to inform him of Sir Benjamin's death, and of his removal from Rook-dale Abbey in consequence. This letter from Mr. Nugent acquainted him that, though they had not been able as yet to detect Barville, now Sir Francis, they had apprehended his servant and accomplice, Rowland, who, to save his own life, had turned evidence

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against

against his master, and divulged such dire atrocities, by him committed, as human nature must shudder to hear repeated. It concluded with an earnest desire to see Henry in town, when he should know more of the affair, by which time he trusted the fiend who had as yet eluded their vigilance, would be in the hands of justice.

Henry the next morning set out for London, and arrived at Mr. Nugent's the same evening, where he learned the following particulars, which the confession of Rowland enabled Mr. Nugent to relate to him.

"Rowland," he began, "was formerly in the service of Sir Benjamin Barville, where soon discovering the vicious and ungovernable propensities of his young master, he, by aiding him in his licentious pursuits, rendered himself so useful to him, that the other, finding his heart to be as depraved as his own, made it worth his while to
continue

continue faithful to him: in short, he at last became so well convinced that Rowland would never betray him, that he seldom proceeded upon any nefarious undertaking without having first obtained his advice and promise of assistance.

“ Barville had often regretted to his iniquitous agent that he had a brother older than himself, and one who not only would, at his father’s decease, enjoy his title and the major part of his property, but who, likewise, during his life, in the indulgence he received, checked that liberality Sir Benjamin might otherwise extend towards himself. For the latter grievance Rowland confessed he had told him that he thought he had found a remedy, which was, if possible, to ruin him in his father’s esteem, the consequence of which must be that Sir Benjamin would be more limited in those indulgences which gave him so much uneasiness; and at his decease, in all probability, the estate, which must devolve to him that inherited the title, would be all that he would receive, and of which

it was not in the power of their efforts to deprive him.

“ This unprincipled advice pleased him too well; but the unimpeachable conduct of his brother for some time rendered every contrivance to injure him abortive until his unfortunate marriage, when his success in deceiving both his father and brother, you, Mr. Radmill, are already apprized of: therefore I shall only observe that it was with infinite pleasure Barville heard that the ship, in which his brother sailed for the West-Indies, was lost at sea, and that all on board had perished. It was now that he deemed himself secure from ever having his treachery in this respect discovered, and of inheriting hereafter his father's title and property; for neither himself nor Rowland, to this day, know aught to the contrary but that the elder Barville, as was reported, found a watery grave.”

Mr. Nugent next enumerated a number of their atrocities;—the villany he had endeavoured

endeavoured to practise on the daughter of Mr. Knightley; his marriage, and subsequent behaviour to Mrs. Barville; the seduction of Mrs. Selworth, together with a long list of *et ceteras* which were committed ere Mrs. Melworth and her daughter were invited to shelter themselves, from the fall of a heavy shower of rain, in Barville Castle, which we shall now pass over, and mention the particulars of that affair, as acknowledged by Rowland.

“ Barville, struck with the beauty and elegant accomplishments,” continued Mr. Nugent, “ of Matilda Melworth, to whom my son was betrothed, determined, if possible, to induce her to fly the protection of her mother, and to live with him; but soon found, in the short time they were acquainted, his vile arts with this lovely girl would never succeed. He had been studying for many days what treachery he could adopt to get her into his power, when he met Matilda in her evening walk,

unaccompanied by her mother;—the evening being fine, he prevailed upon her to extend her walk as far as the Castle, observing, that as her mother was not with her, he would escort her back in his carriage. Poor Matilda suspected not the viper's diabolical intention, and being fond of walking, complied. They soon after entered the Castle, where they had been but a short time when he insulted her ears with his odious passion, which, on Matilda's refusing to listen to, he proceeded to take some unwarrantable liberties with her person. Matilda, terrified, would have fled; but he prevented her, and continued his indecent freedoms. My son, who was on his journey into Wales to make her a visit, at this time was within a short distance of the Castle. He had descried Matilda with Barville; he hastened towards them, but ere he could reach them, he saw them enter the Castle together, which, when he had gained, the door being open, he distinctly heard her shrieks and entreaties. He in an instant

instant sprung from his horse, rushed into the house, and at last reached the apartment in which they were, burst open the door, and entered. Barville, astonished at the intrusion, released Matilda from his grasp, and flew to his sword. Unfortunately, my poor boy was unarmed; yet it did not prevent him from rushing towards him with an intent to wrench the weapon from his hand, when Rowland, who had followed him unperceived, seized him by the arms as he advanced. Barville at the same moment cut him across the face with such violence as to separate the under jaw from his head, and then, with a deadly thrust, pierced him to the heart. Matilda, during this horrid transaction, fled; they pursued her, but could no where discover her."

Henry, who had before heard from Mary-Jane what Mrs. Melworth had related to her respecting this horrid transaction, rightly concluded that Matilda had found means to secrete herself in the Castle, as she arrived
not

not at her mother's until the following evening, which accounted likewise for their not being able to discover her, as had she taken the direct road home, they must inevitably have overtaken her.

“ Disappointed, and struck with horror at the deed they had committed, they at length returned, summoned fortitude to remove the body they had so inhumanly mutilated and deprived of life, into the uninhabitable part of the Castle; they then, having, with the utmost celerity, arranged every thing for their departure, on the wings of guilt and fear again set off for London.

“ All this was the work of a few hours; and being executed with such secrecy and dispatch, not a soul besides themselves, that were then within the Castle, was privy to it.

“ For many weeks after their arrival in London, they remained in hourly expectation of being apprehended; time, however, subdued

subdued their fear, and Mary-Jane had nearly fallen another victim to increase their catalogue of crimes.

“ Of what remains, Mr. Radmill, of Rowland’s confession, you are already acquainted with, except that what Barville beheld in Mary-Jane’s apartment, when called there by the screams of Mabel, in Barville Castle, immediately occurred to him must have been dropped in the removal of the body some months before; though how it came there he could by no means account for. Much alarmed lest the murder of my boy should be brought to light in consequence, he sought Rowland, who urged that a second murder was become absolutely necessary, if they hoped to conceal the first.

“ To this, however, Barville strongly objected; and having, with Rowland, removed what had given rise to this diabolical advice, they passed the night in fruitlessly devising what else might be adopted to prevent a discovery of their villany.

“ The

“ The next day, the day on which they passed you, when you were concealed behind a fragment of the ruin, having come to no conclusion, this was still the subject of their discourse, when Barville succeeded in convincing Rowland that if Mary-Jane could be induced to a voluntary continuance with him, their secret would be safe; and that it would be more easy to reconcile her to this after he had brutally forced her to his bed, than by the insinuating arts of seduction, in which he was well practised, but which he knew her to be proof against: therefore they soon after separated, Barville determined that but a short time should elapse ere he would proceed to extremities.

“ The third night from this he was proceeding to accomplish his purpose, when the miniature, which hung by a ribbon from the neck of Mary-Jane, again convulsed him with fear, and retarded his purpose. This had been a present from himself to his brother, soon after he became acquainted with his marriage; for the better
to

to deceive him into a belief that he was using his utmost endeavours to reconcile his father to him, he loaded him with presents, and among others, having engaged an artist to take their likenesses, had presented them to his brother. This picture, therefore, which he discovered suspended from the neck of Mary-Jane, filled him with nameless horrors, and the replies of Mary-Jane to his questions convinced him that she was his niece. Something like compunction struck upon his heart as he hurried from the apartment: however it was but of short duration; something whispered him his brother might be still living, and would some day or other call him to a severe account for his inhuman conduct to his child. He hastened back again to her apartment to interrogate her further on the subject, when he discovered the door through which she had passed with an intent to escape from the Castle. Conviction now flashed upon his mind that she had before explored the parts to which it led, and had beheld what
he

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he

he hoped would have for ever remained concealed from every eye;—wrought to a pitch of desperation, he rushed after her, at last discovered her, and would have sacrificed her but for your timely interference.

“ Barville knew you at first sight; and on his escaping you, soon informed Rowland of what had happened. Your death was then determined on; every part of the ruin they fruitlessly examined to discover you; at length, being quite wearied in their search, and at the same time convinced that you had not only effected your own escape, but Mary-Jane’s also, and judging you would soon return, properly attended, to secure them, their only safety was in a speedy flight; therefore they left the Castle, as old Martha informed you, and contrived, about the middle of the second night from their departure, to reach Barville’s residence in Pall-Mall, which yesterday underwent a minute search, when Rowland only was detected, who affirmed that his master was still
within

within the house, though every endeavour was vainly used to discover him."

We have omitted mentioning the agitation of Mr. Nugent, or the breaks in consequence that occurred in the course of this narrative, which he had hardly finished when his servant entered, and acquainted him that a person requested permission to speak a few words with him. He was desired to conduct the person to him, who proved to be one of the officers that had been in quest of Barville; when as he entered the room, Mr. Nugent enquired if as yet he had been successful.

"Not altogether so," he replied; "we have found him, but in a most terrible situation; for, no doubt, being well convinced that for his numerous crimes he should suffer an ignominious death, he has taken the only precaution that was left him to prevent it, and blown out his brains with a pistol."

Nugent

Nugent and Henry were so shocked at this intelligence, that it was some time ere they could interrogate him further on the subject; at length, however, they desired to be informed of the particulars of this shocking catastrophe.

The officer proceeded as follows:—

“ Having every reason to believe, Gentlemen, from Rowland’s confession, that his master was still concealed somewhere in his own house, we again hastened thither with an intention of commencing a second search. When we arrived there, we were informed by one of his servants of the horrid circumstance I have just mentioned, and that, as Rowland informed us, he had been secreted in a remote part of the house, which in our examination had escaped us, to which place we then ascended with him, where we beheld the deplorable object extended on the floor; and having put the muzzle of the pistol, with which he had dispatched

dispatched himself, into his mouth, it had blown off the back part of his head, and scattered his brains in various parts of the room, rendering him a spectacle too shocking to describe. We then left the house, when I conceived it necessary to call and acquaint you, Sir, of what had happened."

The officer soon after withdrew. Henry continued with Mr. Nugent two or three days, when he received a note from his father, informing him of his arrival in town; he then took leave of Mr. Nugent, having obtained a promise that he would soon make him a visit, and hastened to join his father.

CHAP. XV.

A Trip to Portsmouth.

RADMILL and Northcote had heard of the deplorable end of Barville ere Henry arrived; to him, however, they were indebted for the particulars. To Lady Barville, whom they had left in Somersetshire, they immediately wrote to apprize her of her husband's death; but as she was entirely ignorant of those recent circumstances which had justly rendered him an object of public indignation, they did not acquaint her that, to avoid an ignominious death, he had become his own executioner; and, unless the Coroner's Jury gave their verdict *felo de se*,
which

which would deprive Mrs. Barville and her children of what remained of the wreck of his fortune, and which must eventually open her eyes to every thing that had happened, they trusted that it would ever be withheld from her knowledge.

The next day, therefore, it was with great joy they heard a verdict had been given—*non compos mentis*. The day after they received an answer to their letter from Lady Barville, in which she entreated them, being the only friends in her present emergency to whom she could apply, to settle for her the affairs of her late husband.

With this request Northcote and Radmill cheerfully complied. They found that out of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds that Barville had received with his wife, forty thousand only remained, which, as he died intestate, descended to Mrs. Barville and her children. Her present residence, with the small estate attached
to

to it, together with the title, was now her eldest son's, who they hoped would live to enjoy it, and, unlike his father, become a worthy member of society. Having settled every thing that was necessary to be done, they dispatched another letter to Lady Barville, to inform her of their proceedings, and concluded with a promise speedily to visit her in Somersetshire.

It was with extreme pleasure Radmill and Northcote beheld Henry's attachment to Mary-Jane, which was now become too apparent to escape their notice. Her recent separation from him seemed to have created that passion in his breast which Northcote, before he knew Mary-Jane was so nearly related to him, had regretted as not likely to take place. To Henry, Mary-Jane had since been indebted for her life; and that he might become the guardian of that life he had preserved, was the dearest wish of his heart.

They

They had been some weeks in London, when Stampford, who since their return had chiefly resided with them, though he possessed a handsome house in Berkley Square, expressed a determination of making a journey to Portsmouth; for as he knew the name of the person with whom Lieutenant Barville resided when it was generally believed he embarked with his regiment for the West-Indies, by applying there he thought it probable he should be able to learn some further account of what had befallen his regretted and deceased friend, ere Radmill rescued him from the horrors of a tempestuous night in the public street, but to expire beneath his hospitable roof.

He had some years before written to the person on the subject, but the answer he received was by no means satisfactory; therefore he was now resolved to recommence his enquiries.

Northcote and Radmill would willingly
VOL. II. L have

have accompanied him; but as they wished to keep Mary-Jane entirely ignorant of whatever intelligence they might obtain, they at last conceived it would be more eligible for Mr. Stampford to perform the journey alone.

The day after his departure they were agreeably surpris'd by Sir Watkin Beverly and his daughter Eliza making them a visit; the latter could not refrain from tears in the happiness she experienced in once more beholding Mary-Jane, who was not less delighted in finding Eliza had not forgotten those reciprocal vows of friendship that had been formerly interchanged between them. Her sister Eleanor, Eliza informed her, had three weeks before given her hand to Mr. Barncombe:—"Therefore," she continued, "as Sir Watkin and myself, now Eleanor and Mr. Barncombe have left us, shall be much in want of some kind, considerate friends to associate with, I must insist that you spend

as

as much of your time with us, in Piccadilly, as you can possibly make convenient, and the good people of your family will permit."

With this friendly request Mary-Jane readily promised to comply; and as Radmill and Northcote were anxious to cultivate the acquaintance of Sir Watkin, whose open, unreserved character they admired, they promised to often accompany her.

Plagiary frequently looked in upon them. Northcote, who was become sociable and cheerful, was by no means displeased with him or his quotations, but would laugh heartily at the disputes which were now with renovated vigour resumed between him and Radmill; though Plagiary, when he found his opponent waxing warm from reiterated contradiction, ever, by some well-introduced lines from his favourite author,

gave the conversation a ludicrous turn, and restored him to good-humour again.

Mrs. Sourby, Radmill learned soon after his return to London, had sold her house, and withdrawn from the metropolis into the country; therefore he could not thank her, as he intended, for her inhumanity in refusing to admit Mary-Jane into her house. The thousand pounds she had borrowed of Henry he intended not to trouble her for; his benevolent heart so far superseded his resentment, that on Henry giving it as his decided opinion that necessity had obliged her to deceive him, he freely forgave her the debt, though the unfeeling conduct she had adopted towards Mary-Jane he could by no means think of with so much indifference.

The money which was due on Henry's note, he transmitted to Mr. Sackworth almost as soon as he arrived in town.

We

We will now leave them happily together, and follow Mr. Stampford to Portsmouth, where, on his arrival, he repaired to the house of a Mrs. Clarke, the person with whom his deceased friend had resided, and on enquiry found it to be occupied by the same woman still;—he soon disclosed to her the purport of his visit, when she related to him the following account.

“Lieutenant Romley,” said she, “and his wife were my lodgers for better than a twelvemonth, during which time Mrs. Romley was safely delivered of a fine girl. Soon after this Mr. Romley was taken extremely ill, owing to his having caught a violent cold, in consequence of his rushing into the water one evening to rescue some poor souls with whom the boat in which they were, had upset, and but for his timely assistance, and a few others urged by his example, they had all been drowned. The Lieutenant, however, was never well afterwards. The doctors that attended him said the complaint

had settled upon his lungs; and after they had tried every remedy in vain to remove it, for more than five months, they pronounced him to be in a deep decline, and advised, as they could do no more for him, change of air. Bristol, I think they told him, was the most likely place to be of service to him; but whether he went there, or not, or what became of him after he left my house, which he did in about three weeks from the time the doctors had advised a removal, finding himself getting daily worse, I am ignorant.

“ I thought his poor wife would have gone distracted. Night after night would she watch by his bed-side, and though she endeavoured to appear cheerful when with him, when away, and he could not hear her, she would cry as though her heart would break.—Poor heart! it used to grieve me to see her,—Well, your Honour, she at last prevailed upon him to remove to London, flattered with the hope that it
would

would prove beneficial to him, as to Bristol he had absolutely declared he would not go.

“ Mr. Temple, who lives in the next street, having some business in town, set off in the stage-coach with them: and he has not forgot it yet, I'll warrant him; for about five miles on this side of London the coach was stopped by four highwaymen, who robbed them of every thing that was worth taking, and then left them with empty pockets to pursue the remainder of their journey.”

Stampford, finding Mrs. Clarke could give him no further information, rewarded her for the trouble he had given her, and requested she would direct him to the house of Mr. Temple, which having done, he luckily found that gentleman at home, who politely, on his mentioning his business, corroborated part of what Mrs. Clarke had related to him. He acknow-

ledged going to London about nineteen years before, in the stage-coach, with a lady, her husband, and a female child; that the gentleman appeared in the last stage of a consumption, and that within five miles of London they had been robbed by highwaymen, as Mrs. Clarke had informed him. He then continued—"When we arrived at the inn in London, the sick gentleman appeared so excessively overcome with the fatigue he had endured, that I advised him to retire to bed as soon as possible: he seemed inclined to follow my advice, and I soon after left him. Having some business to transact in that part of the town the next day, I took the opportunity of calling at the inn, and enquiring after the poor invalid, when I was informed that he continued there but a few hours after I left him, for on feeling himself a little revived, one of the household heard him tell his wife, who sat weeping by his side, that he was determined to adjourn to the house of a friend, which was in Covent-Garden, where

where he doubted not but they should meet with a most friendly reception.—‘ For,’ he continued, ‘ as our late misfortunes have taken from me my last six-pence, I will incur no unnecessary expence by continuing at an inn, when I can be quite as well accommodated elsewhere without contracting debts that require almost immediate payment.’

“ The landlord, on being informed of this, made him an offer of apartments in his house until he could write to his friends, or any thing besides they might have occasion for; but this the other refused to accept, and notwithstanding the night was dark, and portended an approaching tempest, he set off about ten o’clock in the evening towards his friend’s residence.

“ The landlord had, on finding him determined to go, offered to procure him a hackney-coach; but this he refused likewise, observing that the distance he had to go was so trifling, that five minutes’ walk

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would

would conduct him to his friend's house. The landlord then suffered him, with his wife and child, to depart; but fearing he was not so well as he endeavoured to appear, desired one of his waiters to follow them at a distance, and if, ere he arrived at the house he sought, he appeared in want of assistance, to run back and inform him, when he would hasten to his relief, and reconduct him to his house.

“ The man did as he was ordered; he followed him into Covent-Garden, when he observed him so much overcome by his walk, that his wife, unable to support him, was necessitated to seat him upon the steps that led to the door of one of the houses they were passing. A heavy shower of hail and rain descended from the overcharged clouds as the man hurried back to acquaint his master of what he had beheld, who set out, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, immediately to rescue him. The object he sought, however, was gone ere he arrived; but he learned from a watchman,

watchman, whom he interrogated on the subject, that a person, who had been found lying on the pavement, with his wife and child, had been taken up by a gentleman in a hackney-coach, who seemed disposed to render them every possible assistance; but who he was, or to what place he had taken them, he could give him no information.

“ The next day, but a short time ere I called at the inn to make enquiries about them, the landlord was informed by a Mr. Andrews, a surgeon, that they had been taken to the house of a Mr. Radmill, in — Street, and that the poor invalid and his wife, notwithstanding every means had been taken for their preservation, had expired during the night; but that their infant was living, and would be well provided for by the humane person under whose care she then was.

“ On my return to Portsmouth I endeavoured to learn some further account of Mr. Romley from Mrs. Clarke, but could procure no satisfactory information.

whereby I could gain any knowledge of his family, as I conceived it my duty to apprize them of the melancholy event. I left Mrs. Clarke without acquainting her of my motive for making the enquiry respecting them; and until this day have never since heard their names mentioned by any one, excepting when I learned, about seven years ago, on my addressing a letter to Mr. Andrews for the purpose, that their offspring was still living, and with Mr. Radmill, who was as much in the dark respecting her parents as myself."——

Mr. Stampford now took his leave of Mr. Temple, and the next day arrived in London, and embraced the first opportunity of relating to Northcote and Radmill the success of his journey.

Mr. Andrews they now sent for, who acknowledged that he had informed the landlord of the inn what Mr. Temple had mentioned to Mr. Stampford, and likewise
answering

answering the letter he had received from him about seven years ago. It was now evidently proved beyond a doubt, though they had long since been convinced of it in their own minds, that Mary-Jane was the daughter of Lieutenant Barville, and the grand-daughter of the late Sir Benjamin Barville and Mr. Northcote.

Mr. Andrews left them ere Mary-Jane returned, who, with Mrs. Mowbray, was gone out in the carriage, the latter having designedly taken her away, that Mr. Stampford might have an opportunity of declaring the result of his journey to Portsmouth. She now joined them, when they strove to overcome those emotions Mr. Stampford's narrative had excited, and met her as usual, with a smile of pleasure, which her presence never failed to inspire.

THE CONCLUSION.

A FEW weeks more had scarcely passed joyously away, when Henry and Mary-Jane were united in the indissoluble bonds of matrimony. Northcote, on the day of their marriage, presented Mary-Jane with twenty thousand pounds, and the like sum was bestowed by Radmill upon Henry. Sir Watkin Beverly, Eliza, Stampford, and Plagiary were present at the nuptials. Northcote danced for joy, and Radmill was equally elated; the troubles they had passed gave an additional zest to that hilarity which prevailed among them.

About

About three months from this, Henry and his bride, Northcote and Mrs. Mowbray, with Radmill and Stampford, made their promised visit to Lady Barville, and continued with her for some weeks, when Stampford became so enamoured with her, that a twelvemonth after this introduction he led her to the altar of Hymen; and the many bliss-fraught years Lady Barville enjoyed with her second choice, made her ample amends for the sufferings she had endured with her first.

Stampford possessed a fortune of one hundred thousand pounds; and as Providence did not bless him with any children of his own, he made his will in favour of his children-in-law. They grew up under his paternal protection and regard, to be a comfort to his old age, and objects of sincere eulogium to all who knew them.

Eliza happening to meet Mr. Goodwin at her amiable friend's, it led to a more intimate

intimate acquaintance; in fine, they saw, and loved each other.

Henry, who, since Goodwin's liberal conduct towards him when under an arrest at the suit of Mr. Sackworth, had ranked him among the foremost of his friends, was extremely pleased at his choice; and as Mr. Goodwin's character, fortune, and family were unexceptionable, Sir Watkin with real satisfaction gave him his daughter, but on this condition, that his daughter should still continue under the same roof with himself, as without her he should be miserable. To this Goodwin cheerfully assented, and few could boast of more real happiness than Sir Watkin for the remainder of his days; nor could he be otherwise, when each new day evinced to him that his children became more attached to each other.

The only incidents that ever occurred to distress him, were the continual disputes
between

between Mrs. Barncombe and her husband, which she never failed to make known to her father. Mrs. Barncombe, now Mary-Jane was known as the granddaughter of the late Sir Benjamin Barville, and heiress of the rich Mr. Northcote, would deign to mention her among the list of her friends; though her dislike to the drysalter still existed, whose honest countenance, whenever they met, sufficiently proved that she was in nowise a favourite of his.

The poor penitent, who had happily led to a discovery of Mary-Jane's birth, expired soon after her arrival in London from Brighton. Northcote, ere she died, pronounced her forgiveness, and hoped that God, whom she had so justly offended, would forgive her also.

Mr. Nugent had the remains of his son removed from Barville Castle, and interred in the family vault; time alleviated his
grief,

grief, and restored him to tranquillity and resignation.

The infamous Rowland, though he escaped the punishment he merited by impeaching his master, yet becoming an object of public detestation, as the only means left him to obtain a sustenance, took to the road, where he continued but a short time; for on being apprehended for a robbery, he was tried, condemned, and executed.

Dunstan, who had rendered such essential service to Mary-Jane when he conveyed her to Mrs. Melworth's, and his wife Martha, were well provided for by Radmill; nor was the humane Mrs. Shipley forgotten.

Mrs. Melworth Mary-Jane prevailed upon to quit her retirement, and to reside with her and Henry; and in the attention and respect she paid to her, supplied the place of that daughter she had lost, and reconciled her to her fate.

Mrs.

Mrs. Sourby, whose last guinea was lost at the gaming-table, except what remained to her from the sale of her house, which, had she been just to Henry, must have gone likewise, became, though too late, sensible of her error;—the trifle, therefore, she still held, she sunk in the Life Office, and retired into a remote part of Cumberland, where she soon after breathed her last sigh among strangers, unknown and unlamented.

Radmill and Northcote for many years witnessed the increasing happiness of Henry and Mary-Jane. Their latter days were unclouded with sorrow. Northcote daily returned thanks to Heaven for its goodness towards him and his, and blessed the hour when the friendless orphan was adopted by

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Contrary to the generality of modern Novels, the story of Ellinor becomes more interesting as it proceeds; and the sentence passed upon Sir Fretful's dramatical exertion in the critic will not apply here. This performance certainly does not want incident: the narrative is neat and simple; and the whole makes an agreeable publication.

British Critic, January, 1799.

Several of the scenes of this Novel display an intimate acquaintance with life, and the habits of what is called *polished* society. Some of the characters are sketched with spirit, particularly that of Lady John Dareall, an intrepid champion for female rights, a bold contemner of vice and folly, and a dignified example of principles,—

“ Beyond the fix'd and settled rules
“ Of vice and virtue in the schools.”

Analytical Review, April 1798.

Ellinor is a deserted child, whose parents are not discovered till the web of her story is nearly completed, and the whole ready to be displayed as a well-finished piece, compact in all its parts, and ornamented with many beautiful flowers of wit and fancy. Sound judgment, solid reasoning, and a knowledge of the world, form the basis of the fabric.

European Magazine, June 1798.

BOOKS PRINTED AT THE MINERVA PRESS.

THE MYSTERY OF THE BLACK TOWER,

By John Palmer,

TWO VOLUMES, 12MO. PRICE 6s. SEWED.

It appears essential to romance, that the scene it describes should either be remote from the times in which we live, or the people with whom we converse. The first of these rules has been obeyed by Mr. Palmer, and he has thrown his scenery back into the reign of Edward the Third—an æra of chivalry and warlike enterprise perfectly favourable to his design. His conception of the subject is, in other respects, sufficiently just; and by the introduction of a facetious Welch Squire, he has enlivened the solemnity of his graver scenes with occasional flashes of humour.

The romance is certainly executed with ability, and discovers such talents for that species of composition, as may be said to merit the protection of the public.

British Critic, October 1797.

THE HERMIT OF CAUCASUS.

TWO VOLUMES, 12MO PRICE 6s. SEWED.

The name of Mr. Moser has the very respectable praise of being prefixed to productions which have the aim of giving "ardour to truth, and confidence to virtue." The oriental tales which compose these volumes are free from any disgusting extravagance of fiction; the Author having avowedly employed supernatural agency agreeably to the prudent restriction of Horace—

"Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus."

We recommend these tales as containing a series of useful lessons, which tend to inculcate a firm reliance on the wisdom and benevolence of a superintending Providence.

Critical Review, February 1799.

BOOKS PRINTED AT THE MINERVA PRESS.

PLAIN SENSE,

THREE VOLUMES, 12MO, PRICE 9S. SEWED.

Third Edition.

A few select books of this kind may be read with great advantage, provided that such reading be not made a daily or serious occupation: with this restriction, we recommend very cordially such volumes as these we are considering. A story more interesting and affecting, or better told than this, has seldom come under our examination. Austere as critics are imagined to be, they are not insensible to the charms of such a heroine as Ellen Mordaunt. Parents may not only, with safety, put these volumes into the hands of their children, but may even peruse them with advantage themselves.

British Critic, December 1796.

DISOBEDIENCE.

By the same Author.

FOUR VOLUMES, 12MO, PRICE 14S. SEWED.

The curiosity of the reader of Novels will naturally expect considerable gratification from any production by the author of Plain Sense. In the perusal of these volumes, that curiosity will not be disappointed.—Amongst the characters, that of Farmer Humphrey, the father of William, illustrates a melancholy truth, that it is not only in genteel and splendid life that the happiness of children is frequently sacrificed to the avarice and ambition of parents.

Critical Review, February 1799.



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